

# THE DAUPHIN

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*The Dauphin after Kocharski.*



# THE DAUPHIN

BY

J. B. MORTON.

AUTHOR OF

'THE BASTILLE FALLS' 'SOBIESKI,' ETC.

*Les nations finissent dans les boudoirs,  
et recommencent dans les camps*



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To  
J. M. N. JEFFRIES



## PREFACE

THE short life of Louis-Charles, Duke of Normandy, the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, has engaged the attention of historians for a hundred and forty years, and has been the subject of a controversy which is still producing books to-day. The documented facts of the boy's ten years, and especially of the thirty-two months of his imprisonment, are few, and are not likely to be supplemented by any important discoveries. But the straightforward story, first elaborated and embroidered by historians who failed to make it more dramatic, and then burlesqued by adventurers to serve their own purposes, was dragged this way and that, turned inside out, until it became a Mystery. The romantic writers have had the best hearing, because they made the story a detective story, and substituted a picturesque rescue for a tragic death. They used ingenuity, imagination and even downright invention in the solution of problems which their own fanciful theories had created.

Those who hold, against all the evidence, that the Dauphin escaped from the Temple, will have an audience to the end of time; because they can leave the reader to imagine a happy ending. They have succeeded in magnifying the difficulties that occur as the story unfolds, in creating doubt and uncertainty by playing with rumours, in establishing hypothesis as fact, until the unbiased reader is tempted to think the problem insoluble. And in all this hurly-burly of contortion or pure fantasy the

plain account of what happened seems to be dull. It has been so often and so spectacularly rejected that to-day there is a temptation not even to examine it. What chance has the last harrowing scene in the prison, when death comes mercifully to the tortured child, against the basket which disappeared with the hideous cobbler into the mist of a January night ? Who will waste a moment by the grey wall in the cemetery of Sainte-Marguerite, when he can find in a small Dutch town the rich falsehood on the stone that covers the bones of a Prussian swindler ?

I hold it certain that the Dauphin died in the Temple on June 8, 1795, as the death certificate stated. The most casual reader of the story in any of the books about the imprisonment in the Temple, written from whatever point of view, would expect that death. The record of his health, both before and after August 13, 1792, the treatment to which he was subjected in prison, the slow development of the disease which was in his blood and had carried off his elder brother, made that death inevitable. How, then, did it come to be doubted and denied ? The answer is to be found in the indomitable romanticism of human nature. Long before his death, his escape was being discussed as a fact ; people had seen him here or there, now in Paris, now in the provinces. Some even said that he had never gone to the Temple at all. And when at length he died, the continual plots to rescue him were remembered, and nothing was more natural than to imagine that one or other of those plots had been successfully carried out. Sooner or later some adventurer was sure to take advantage of the pious hopes of so many people that one day Louis-Charles would return, and the

Monarchy be restored. Meanwhile Regnault-Warin the writer, who had been imprisoned under the Terror, had left France in 1795, and returned in the next year, had an opportunity of listening to the wild tales of the Dauphin's survival. In 1800 appeared his historical novel 'Le Cimetiere de la Madeleine,' which contained an exciting account of the escape of Louis-Charles, and supplied successive pretenders with evidence plausible enough to convince large numbers of people. Seventeen years later Regnault-Warin published his 'Élégide,' which contains, among much indifferent writing, a description of Charles I conducting Louis-Charles to the seats of the martyrs in Heaven, and a picture of the Dauphin, with the dates of his birth and death beneath it. But by that time the first book had done its work.

After the flight to Varennes not only the ordinary citizens of Paris but the deputies also were ready to believe the wildest story of an escape, and some of the details which Regnault-Warin put into his book can be traced back thus far—notably the substitution of a child for the Dauphin. One of the effects of this panic was that, when the royal family was finally imprisoned, every precaution was taken to prevent an escape. Those precautions explain the opinion of Jarjays, that no amount of careful planning and scheming would be of any use without an almost miraculous stroke of luck to help them; and they also explain the realisation of those of a military temper that the boy would have to be rescued by force. From the attempts which we know to have failed we can judge of the impossibility of the task. Yet the story of an escape persisted, because people wanted to believe it true.

No historian who has postulated the survival of the Dauphin has ever given a plausible account of his rescue, or of his life outside the Temple. The impostors themselves repeated the lies of their predecessors. Not one of them ever presented the shadow of a shadow of a credible story. Those who to-day still refuse to accept the death of the Dauphin in the Temple cling to one or other of the fairy-tales which d'Almeras discredited for ever ten years ago.

J. B. MORTON.



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# THE DAUPHIN

## PART I

### THE PRISONER OF THE TEMPLE

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF LOUIS-CHARLES

LOUIS-CHARLES, Duke of Normandy, was born at five minutes to seven on the evening of Easter Sunday, March 27, in the year 1785. As soon as it was known that the Queen was in travail, Mme. de Lamballe had set in motion all the complicated details of that ceremonial which to-day is too often made a subject for jest, but which was so fitting an accompaniment to the majesty of the Court of Versailles. From the various apartments of the palace came the members of the royal family, the ministers and secretaries, the lords and ladies in waiting, and all the minor officials. When the physicians had bathed and tended the baby in the presence of the King, Louis XVI returned to the Queen, and announced the birth of a boy. Some minutes later Mme. de Polignac, governess of the royal children, followed by three attendant governesses, carried the baby to the Queen's bedchamber. From there, escorted by the Captain of the King's Bodyguard, he was borne to his own apartments.

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While couriers were posting to Paris and to the departments with the news, Vergennes was choosing special envoys to carry it to the French ambassadors at foreign courts. That same evening the little Duke of Normandy was taken to the church of Notre-Dame, where Cardinal de Rohan baptised and christened him. Immediately afterwards Calonne placed round his neck the cross and ribbon of the Order of the Holy Ghost. A *Te Deum* was sung in the palace chapel, the tocsin sounded, the guns of the garrison fired a salute, and were answered by the guns of the Bastille and the Invalides. In the Place d'Armes fireworks were let off, and the population of Versailles gave itself up to the wildest rejoicing, which lasted for days.

In his richly decorated cradle the heir to all the glories of the French Monarchy slept peacefully. Ten years later he died in a prison-cell, with one official beside him.

Within a week of the birth of the little Prince Mme. de Polignac had submitted a list of names of those who were to form his household: ladies-in-waiting, doctors, ushers, grooms of the chamber, tutors, music and dancing masters, valets, barbers, and so on. But the general public took no great interest in him, since it was his elder brother the Dauphin, Louis-Joseph, who was the important member of the family. When he was two years old, his sister, Sophie, died at the age of eleven months, and the post-mortem examination revealed diseased lungs. From that moment the health of the two boys was closely watched. As soon as he could walk Louis-

Charles was given a little garden at Trianon, where he played his games. He was of a gay temperament, easily amused, but self-willed and given to outbursts of temper; very devoted to his father and mother. It is not necessary to believe that he was as precocious as Beauchesne, discharging a pious duty, would have us believe, or that he actually uttered the inconceivably priggish phrases which royalist chroniclers of a later day preserved with loving care. But we may take for granted engaging manners and an attractive appearance—blue eyes, fair hair, a fresh complexion, a well-made body. His mouth was ugly, owing to the thickness of his lips.

As he grew older gardening and playing at soldiers were his favourite occupations. He was always in the open air. But in the spring of 1788 there was an epidemic of smallpox, and it was decided that he must be inoculated against it. His sister, Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte, Madame Royale, had undergone this unpleasant operation in 1782, and had taken nearly two months to recover from the effects of it. His brother the Dauphin had recovered in a little over two weeks. Louis-Charles was taken to St. Cloud, and there, at 9.30 in the evening of the fifteenth of May, the vaccine was injected into his right and his left arm. He became feverish, the wounds 'took,' and later the usual scabs formed. In two weeks he was well again, and carried on either arm the customary scars.

In the spring of 1789 Versailles was full of the noise of the coming Revolution, and by an irony which it is easy to appreciate now the Dauphin's life, which had given no cause for anxiety, was in grave peril. The little boy

#### 4 THE PRISONER OF THE TEMPLE

lay ill while the States-General were meeting, and on June 3, in answer to an urgent summons, Louis and Marie-Antoinette came to Meudon to be by his side. They remained by the death-bed, and in the night the child died. Thus the four-year-old Louis-Charles became Dauphin, and heir to that Monarchy which was to be so shortly in peril and fighting for its life.

There is a letter which Marie-Antoinette wrote six weeks after the death of Louis-Joseph. It is the best portrait we have of the new Dauphin, and it is of considerable value as a document, for reasons which will appear later. In this letter the mother says that the boy's health has always been sound, but that he is sensitive and nervous, and that 'the slightest unusual noise has an extraordinary effect on him.' She speaks of convulsions, one attack at Fontainebleau, one after the inoculation, one in the winter of '87. Returning to the subject of noise, she says that any unaccustomed sound frightens him, even the barking of a dog. He is strong and healthy, and has violent fits of temper, but is normally affectionate. He keeps his promises, but is indiscreet, and inclined to repeat what he is told. Often he exaggerates what he has heard—his worst fault. He cannot apply himself to his lessons, and has not learnt to read. He has no idea of his importance, which is a good thing. 'Our children learn soon enough what they are.' He is very fond of his sister, and when he is given a present asks for one for her. By nature and temperament he is gay and light-hearted, and plenty of fresh air is essential for him.

It is a charming letter, and shows the interest which the Queen took in her son's upbringing, and it should

be read by all who still think of Marie-Antoinette as a frivolous and empty-headed woman.

The boy was too young to realise that any change had come over his life at the death of his brother, and was more pleased with the dog Moufflet, which now became his, than with the prospect of the Crown of France. He continued to play his games in the garden and to submit with impatience to the lessons of the Abbé d'Avaux. His parents spent all the time they could spare with him, and often presided at the lessons or watched him at play. His mother read the tales of Perrault to him, and recited the fables of La Fontaine, and she played simple melodies to him on her harpsichord. In return, he would bring her flowers from his own garden. But there were days when he had to endure the boredom and fatigue of ceremonial occasions, as when Bailly, Mayor of Paris, knelt before him to offer the homage of the Commune, and he saw all the glasses raised to drink his health.

A month later he took an unwilling and a startled, only half-conscious part in that famous scene at Versailles, that mad indiscretion which led to the march of the women and all the subsequent degradation of the royal family. He was summoned from his play by Mme. de Tourzel, and taken to his mother. She led him along the corridors of the palace, until he could hear a roar of voices and a clatter of dishes. Then the great doors of the Salle de l'Opéra were thrown open, and his mother lifted him up in her arms and carried him to her box. He looked down on the horseshoe tables, and saw the sight he loved—soldiers in uniform. Some had drawn



their swords, and all were toasting his father, his mother, himself. The officers of the King's Guard distributed white cockades to their guests, the officers of the Regiment of Flanders. The band began to play, and voices sang '*O Richard, O mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne*' . . . Then he was lifted again, and his mother bore him across the vast hall, walking among the tables, with his father beside her. Confused shouting accompanied them, and if it be true that the Dauphin was sensitive to noise the triumphal progress can have done him little good. He did not live long enough to realise the mischief of that Thursday, the first day of October.

For the next few days he was probably conscious of a certain excitement all around him. The exaltation of the banquet remained long after the fumes of the wine had evaporated, and the courtiers, dumbfounded during the early days of the Revolution, and dreading the vigour of this new thing which had come to disturb their easy lives, took heart, and became insolently confident. Nobody who had seen the drawn swords and the transfigured faces at the banquet could believe that the old world was really in danger.

In the small hours of October 6 he was awakened by Mme. de Tourzel, and hurried along dark, cold corridors to his father. At an hour when all was usually quiet there were sounds of people hastening to and fro, and when presently he was taken into a room that looked out on to the Court of Marble he heard a great uproar outside. His sister was there, and his mother took a hand of each of them, and brought them on to a balcony. Her appearance was greeted by a storm of shouting, but

not of the kind which he had heard at the banquet. He and his sister were dragged back into the room.

Twice within a week the child whose nerves were so sensitive had been subjected to terrifying experiences, the meaning of which he had no chance of understanding. Nor was that the end of it. There was the slow journey to Paris, twelve miles, with a howling mob all the way, and when that was over, strange surroundings. Dozing and waking by starts in the arms of his governess, he was finally put to bed in a hastily prepared room, with a door that would not shut. The governess barricaded the entrance with bits of furniture. Next day a deputation from the National Assembly came to the Tuileries, and once more the Dauphin was lifted up by his mother and shown to the deputies, who wished him long life.

A little child soon becomes accustomed to new surroundings, and even to new habits. The Dauphin was too young to wonder why officers of the National Guard followed him and his mother and father even when they walked about the palace. But he missed his garden, and took even less interest in his lessons than before. He was given a herbal, but could take no interest in pictures of flowers. On the day before his sister was to make her first Communion he said to Mme. de Tourzel, 'I should like to make two bouquets for to-morrow, one for my mother and the other for my sister.' His parents had noticed his lack of interest in indoor occupations, and when this remark was reported to them, they gave orders for a small garden to be prepared for him in the north-east corner of the palace grounds, at the edge of the Quai

des Tuileries, and in full view of all who came and went along the riverside.

The garden was at the end of a terrace and on a level with the quays, and here, where another ill-fated child, the King of Rome, was to play his games, the Dauphin passed the happiest days of his short life. Although an officer and a detachment of the National Guard always accompanied him to the garden, he took pleasure in the uniforms and the muskets. Nevertheless, later on, he complained to his governess that he could not understand the changes that had taken place. He missed the gentlemen of the King's Guard, and instinctively distrusted some of the rough faces and the harsh voices which surrounded him. After a time, to humour him, the King and Queen gave him a uniform of the National Guard and a small sword, and made him Colonel of his own regiment, the Royal Dauphin. He was equally popular with the soldiers, to whom he presented flowers, and with the crowds that thronged the quays to see him walking with his mother and his governess, or feeding his rabbits, or learning simple drill movements. Children of the people were invited into his garden, and found him simple and friendly. Naturally the Queen, who now recognised the strength of the Revolution, encouraged the Dauphin to ingratiate himself with the people. She may have thought that the child might save what was in such imminent danger of destruction. It would have been a sentimental idea, but Marie-Antoinette saw the Revolution as an attack on herself and her family, and never understood from what depths arose the violent demand for justice.



One day the architect Palloi put the Queen in an awkward position. He demanded, through Mme. de Tourzel, the honour of presenting to the Dauphin a set of dominoes which he had made from the stones of the Bastille. The Queen had the tact to pretend that there was nothing unusual in the idea of such a presentation, and Palloi was taken into the garden, where he offered his present to its owner with these words: 'The gift should prove the more agreeable to your Highness for being composed of the stones of the Bastille, which cannot but recall the generosity with which the King, your father, has renounced all ideas of despotism.' The Dauphin, coached by his governess beforehand, replied: 'I am touched, Monsieur, that it should have occurred to you that a game of dominoes would amuse me, and I thank you very much for this gift.'

While the Dauphin played in his garden the National Guard was being organised throughout France, and the Feast of Pikes was drawing near. The regular army, still existing on paper, was falling to pieces. Those officers who were in sympathy with the Revolution no longer attempted to impose discipline on their men. Those who were still loyal to the Monarchy were powerless, and despaired. They saw regiments deposing their commanders. News came of the revolt of the Royal Champagne at Hesdin, led by a nineteen-year-old subaltern of whom history was to hear more—Davout. They heard of insubordination and mutiny at Tarascon, at Rennes, at Perpignan, and men said that the officers of the old régime must resign, and that a new army inspired by the principles of the Revolution must be

formed. The Assembly in Paris did nothing, and the movement of federation, helped on by the machinery of the clubs, threatened to sweep away the harassed deputies. It was then decided to invite to the Champ-de-Mars deputies of the federal battalions, to take part in a prolonged festival of goodwill. As soon as the deputations began to arrive in Paris it was clear that this was to be one of those extraordinary moments in the Revolution when all enmity would be forgotten. There was no question of any disloyalty to the Monarchy, and before the festival was over one might have thought that the Federals had marched to save the Monarchy from its enemies.

Louis-Charles, now in his sixth year, was called to play his part. On July 13, the eve of the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, when the deputations filed past at the foot of one of the great staircases of the Tuileries, he was raised in his mother's arms, and shown to them. On the next day he was present at the Champ-de-Mars, and saw the abominable Talleyrand making a mockery of the Catholic religion. He must have been very bored by the solemn speeches, and was probably proud and pleased when he heard his father cheered. He saw him rise from his chair, and heard him swear to maintain the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly. Then, while a kind of madness rocked the crowd, he was lifted high in his mother's arms, and heard her say: '*Voilà mon fils ! Il se réunit ainsi que moi dans les mêmes sentiments.*' He saw great banners waving, and heard salvoes of gunfire. Lafayette rode by on his famous white horse. There was music and singing. And when the

## BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

ceremonies were finished the revelry continued all over Paris. The little boy must have forgotten the hostile faces at the Tuileries, for all this tempest of gaiety seemed to spring from deep devotion to Louis and Marie-Antoinette. But though many people were deceived, here and there an intelligent observer was troubled. Mirabeau, even setting aside his hatred of the hero of the day, Lafayette, could find no cause for rejoicing. He knew the French to the marrow. And he was right. Louis did not know how to use this astonishing enthusiasm of the people, which was only an incident. Within a few days the Revolution moved forward upon its course once more.

The Dauphin went back to his garden and his games. In February 1791, just before his sixth birthday, his aunts Victoire and Adelaide emigrated, and an angry crowd massed in the Carrousel, demanding to see him. A rumour had started that he had gone with them. But Lafayette dispersed the mob and restored order. No other major incident occurred to disturb the routine of his life until four months had passed.

On the afternoon of June 20, 1791—a date he would have remembered had he lived—as soon as the great heat of the day was past, his mother took him and his sister for a drive in the Tivoli gardens. They returned to the Tuileries at seven o'clock, and his mother gave her orders for the next day to the commanding officer of the National Guard, as was customary. At nine o'clock he went to his rooms, where his evening meal was served. There was nothing unusual for him to notice. It was an evening

like any other evening. But he was surprised when, awakened from his sleep, he saw his mother's face in the opening of the green damask curtains of his bed. He had had but little sleep, and was drowsy. He heard her say in a low voice the words that Mme. de Tourzel, who was there, reports. 'We are going. There'll be plenty of soldiers where we're going.' Roused fully now, he heard her continue, 'You will command your regiment.' 'In that case,' said the little fellow, leaping from his bed, 'bring me my boots and my sword. Quick! Let us be off!'

While he was being dressed, one of the women began to weep. His mother hastened from the room, and shortly afterwards he was half carried, half led down to the room where she waited. For, the first excitement having worn off, he was heavy with sleep, and incapable of understanding what was going on. They put on, over his clothes, a girl's robe, which Pauline de Tourzel had made, and a bonnet, to disguise him. 'What do you think we are going to do?' asked his sister. He replied that, since they were dressed up, they were doubtless going to act in some comedy.

The Queen came and went. The King arrived. Nobody spoke much. Then, after about twenty minutes, Mme. de Tourzel and the Queen pushed the two children through a door, and they were led along a dark corridor, and down a staircase, into an empty room with glass doors. Through these doors they could see a vast court, lit up, across which soldiers went to and fro. Then a coachman approached and opened the door, but the Dauphin was far too sleepy to recognise in this man who led him by



the hand across the court the Swedish officer, Fersen. He was lifted into a carriage, and placed between his sister and Mme. de Tourzel. The carriage rumbled across the cobbles, and out into the streets of Paris. It turned to the right, then to the right again, and bumped along the quays, passing the garden where he had played; then across the Place Louis XV, and down the rue St. Honoré to the rue de l'Echelle. Here he awoke, in time to hear the clatter of hoofs and to see the flash of torches as Lafayette passed on his way to the Tuileries. Terrified, he felt himself seized by Mme. de Tourzel, who hid him under her skirts. He said afterwards that he thought someone was coming to murder him. After that he slept again, Mme. Elizabeth arrived, and finally the King and the Queen. The journey started. Outside the St. Martin barrier the family was transferred to the large yellow and green berlin, and the fugitives rolled eastwards through the summer night. The little boy was probably asleep when Fersen left them at Bondy. He may have been awakened by the laughter and the jesting when, after passing through Meaux, the royal family made a rough meal, without plates or forks. As the day advanced the heat inside the carriage became almost intolerable, and there was a welcome breath of air when they came to a steep hill, and the children were allowed to get out of the berlin and walk up the hill. The King walked with them. But by the time they reached Chaintrix, in the full heat of the early afternoon, the children were in a pitiable condition. There Gabriel Vallet, an inn-keeper's son from Vitry-le-François, who had been at the Feast of Pikes, recognised the travellers, and since no denial was possible

the party rested awhile in the house of de Lagny, the post-master. But when they resumed the journey, the postillion was Vallet. At Châlons there were more recognitions, and possibly Vallet's secret travelled on. In the evening they came into the cool forest of Argonne. The children dozed and awoke, awoke and dozed through those fateful hours in which the destiny of the Monarchy was being decided. But they could not have slept through the sudden clamour in the covered way beneath the church of St. Gengoult at Varennes. 'Halt, or we fire!' and then the plunging of the horses, and the jerk and jar as the berlin stops. Voices shouting menacingly, and loud replies; the windows of the carriage lowered and a lantern thrust in. Sauce finds the passport in order, and says so, and a murmur of many voices supports him. And then breaks in the angry voice of Drouet, swearing and threatening. Drouet carries the day. They must remain till morning. And then Louis makes a feeble attempt to command. 'Forward, postillions!' But the postillions remain motionless, and the armed men about the carriage prepare to use force. The tocsin sounds. The streets are filling with people. The whole town is stirring, answering the beat of a drum.

While the King and Queen, from the room at the top of Sauce's house, heard the entry into the town of Choiseul and Goguelat and the hussars, and for a moment hoped again, and while Destez dashed the last hope by addressing Louis as 'Sire,' the little boy lay sleeping peacefully on a bed. Beside him sat Mme. de Tourzel, her head bowed on her hand. Into this room crowds pressed, while Louis paced to and fro, calm, and ready to answer

questions. Choiseul, Goguelat, and Damas entered the room. They offered to clear the town, but Louis would not have them use force. Perhaps he still believed in some lucky chance that might set him at liberty to continue his journey. More likely he was true to his principle, the principle that lost him his throne and his head. Goguelat went out into the street, mounted his horse, drew his sword and gave an order to his men. He was determined to make a fight of it. But the troopers would not budge. They shouted 'Vive la Nation!' and Roland, an officer of the National Guard, fired a pistol-shot at Goguelat, and wounded him in the shoulder, so that he fell from his horse. The crowd, feeling its strength, and knowing that the soldiers were on the side of the people, roared with delight. And when the news came that the cavalry of Bouillé was approaching, and was even now at Chépy, the populace dragged out carts and furniture to barricade the streets, and seized scythes, old muskets, pikes, swords—anything that came to hand—and prepared to resist any attempt to set free the royal family.

Through all this noise the Dauphin and his sister slept the sleep of exhaustion, while their parents tried to make up their minds what to do. The crowd was demanding a return to Paris, but they knew that they could only return as prisoners; and the frontier was so near Varennes. While they watched the growing light of day there came into that small, low-ceilinged room in the house of Sauce an old woman, his grandmother. She had heard in her neighbouring village the astonishing story that the royal family was spending the night in her grandson's house. So she had trudged across the fields, and now

shuffled hesitatingly into the room, and curtseyed. Going to the bed upon which the children still slept, she sank to her knees, hid her face in the coverlet, and cried bitterly.

It was after six o'clock when Bayon and Romeuf, bringing the orders of the Assembly from Paris, shouldered their way through the people and were led by Sauce past the two peasants with pitchforks who guarded the door of the room where the royal family waited. The King and Queen were talking to Choiseul and Damas, and Romeuf, who was devoted to the Queen, and whose heart was not in the business, found himself unable to enter the room. Bayon went in alone and begged the King to return to Paris, 'to save our women, our children from being massacred.' Marie-Antoinette pointed to her own children on the bed. 'Am I, too, not a mother?' she asked. Bayon then mentioned the decree of the Assembly, which Romeuf carried; but when the door of the room was opened they saw Romeuf in tears, leaning against a window. 'You!' said the Queen. 'I would not have believed it.' The King took the decree, saying, 'There is no longer a King in France.'

Louis XVI now knew that his only hope was Bouillé, who was rumoured to be so close to the town. He therefore played for time, in which he had the tacit support of Romeuf. But Bayon roused the crowd by telling them that Bouillé was at hand, and that the King was trying to delay his departure for that reason. Even when the carriage had been brought to the door by a howling mob, Louis fell asleep. When he awoke, Mme. Neuville fainted. Marie-Antoinette refused to leave her, and a

doctor was summoned. But pleadings and stratagems alike were of no avail. Bouillé's troops had been seen at Montfaucon, and the crowd was in a panic. Louis yielded, and led his family down the stairs to the waiting carriage. The Dauphin and his sister came last, clutching Mme. de Tourzel, still sleepy, and afraid. They were lifted into the carriage, and that terrible journey began.

The procession had started at about eight o'clock, and at first had made good speed, since the cavalry of Bouillé could be seen on the far bank of the Aise, with young Bouillé trying in vain to ford the river and rescue the captives. But even when the road crossed to the other bank, at Boureuilles, there was no attack, and as the heat increased the pace was slowed down. From the feet of the thousands who walked before, behind and on either side of the berlin a great cloud of dust arose, and as men and women wearied and dropped out to return to their homes their places were taken by newcomers who pressed in from lanes and footpaths. In the midst of the jostling, singing multitude the berlin lurched on its way. The windows were down, and the interior was filled with floating dust. Those who could come close enough spat at the King and the Queen, or bellowed obscenities and threats. In the villages and towns there were long halts, because the main street was blocked by every man, woman and child in the place. Outside Clermont there was speech-making, and it was noted that the Queen and her children were ill and exhausted. It was long after mid-day when they came along the road that leads up into the forest of Argonne, and down to Ste. Meneshould, where a whole countryside had gathered after the news

of the arrest at Varennes. Tables had been set in the open air, and the route was lined with sightseers. But here at last there was to be a moment's respite. The prisoners were escorted by the mayor and the municipal officers to the Town Hall, where a meal awaited them. Their faces and their clothes dark with dust, they sat down and ate in silence the excellent meal which had been provided—all except the Dauphin, who, after a spoonful of soup, fell asleep on his chair. From a window on the first floor he was shown to the crowd below, and it was then intended that he should be bathed and put to bed. But once more panic broke out. It was said that the delay was another excuse to wait for Bouillé, who was advancing on the town. So the procession took the road again, and the berlin jolted on towards the plain of Champagne under a blazing sun. All through the afternoon it went slowly onwards across the great plateau in a choking dust; past the windmill of Valmy and the marsh where the peasants hacked brave Dampierre to pieces, who had saluted the King and Queen as they went by; across that battlefield on which Goethe saw a new world begin; through Aube, with the sun going down the sky, and sending its level rays to scorch the group huddled in the berlin, and now in a torpor of weakness and fatigue; through Tillay and Lépine, where a drunken band smashed the windows of the parish church; and still onwards through the cooler evening, until, when darkness had fallen, the wheels rolled slowly into Châlons, under the high arch which had been built to welcome the young Austrian Archduchess to France twenty-one years before, and was called, in her honour, the Porte Dauphine.

It was after eleven o'clock at night, but there must be speeches before the prisoners were allowed to proceed to the Prefecture. There the Queen was offered bouquets, and the King had to hold an official reception, after which a formal supper was served, and was attended by all the officials of the town. At two o'clock in the morning they were allowed to retire, but only the children slept. For a mad hope had sprung up again. Loyal townsfolk urged the King to escape by a secret staircase. Everybody had a plan.

In a room overlooking the gardens the little boy slept while his parents debated the chances of success of this plan, or that, or the other. A strong body of the National Guard of Rheims was expected. Who knows what might happen?

While the King was at Mass the next morning, in the chapel of the Prefecture, the windows were smashed, and there was a great commotion outside. It was the men of Rheims. Once more the rumour that Bouillé was at the gates lashed the mob into a frenzy, and once more the royal family was forced to set off in haste. They took the road to Epernay, surrounded as ever by a yelling crowd. Once more the sun blazed from a cloudless sky. Once more the sweat made runnels on the begrimed faces of the prisoners, and the dust settled over their clothes, in their hair, and penetrated to their bodies. Once more the insults and the threats continued hour after hour. The men of Rheims were more ferocious than any others, and it was to their mercy that the prisoners were left when a rumour that Châlons was being pillaged sent the Châlonnais home as fast as their

legs would carry them. After this the prisoners were actually in danger of their lives, and it was early evening before a halt was made for refreshment and rest at Epernay. The little Dauphin, now terrified, saw the crowd surging round the Hôtel de Rohan, and heard the uproar. The National Guard were hardly able to clear a passage when the berlin stopped, and Louis-Charles, carried on the shoulder of one of the men, saw raised arms brandishing hatchets and mattocks and clubs. He lost sight of his mother and father and began to cry out. And Cazotte, an officer of the National Guard, took him and carried him into the hotel, to the room where the Queen waited. She was trying to mend her torn dress.

When, after a meal, the prisoners returned to the berlin they had to come from the hotel one by one and surrounded by soldiers with linked arms, while the crowd threatened. Bayon, though invested with the authority of the Assembly, was no longer able to protect his prisoners, and once more the berlin took the road in the midst of a horde of ruffians fiercer and more lawless than any encountered hitherto.

Somewhere between Epernay and Dormans—probably near Port-à-Binson—on the road which the railway follows to-day, between the hills that rise on either bank of the Marne, there was a halt and a sudden cessation of the uproar. It was between half-past seven and eight in the evening. From another carriage, facing towards Epernay, descended the three Commissioners of the Assembly, La Tour-Maubourg, Barnave and Pétion. With the officer Dumas beside them, and preceded by their usher, they walked through the almost silent crowd



towards the berlin. The royal family greeted them as deliverers. Marie-Antoinette, recognising Maubourg, grasped his hand. Louis declared once more that he had never intended to cross the frontier, and Barnave whispered to Dumas, 'If the King remembers to repeat that story, we shall yet save him.' Maubourg and Barnave, moderates, had no great stomach for the work before them, and it was left to Pétion, representing what was then the extreme left, to read the decree of the Assembly, empowering the three deputies to protect the royal family on their journey to Paris. Then Dumas took command of the bedraggled cavalcade.

There were six already in the berlin, and it was with a show of reluctance that Barnave and Pétion prepared to climb in. But the King, who probably realised that their presence might mean a respite from the attentions of the mob, made room for them. The Queen took the Dauphin on her knees, and Barnave sat down between her and the King. Madame Royale made way for Pétion, who sat between Mme. Elizabeth and Mme. de Tourzel. La Tour-Maubourg found a place in the cabriolet.

The Dauphin, refreshed after a long sleep, bounced about on his mother's knees, and laughed and played with his sister. He stared at the Commissioners with the grave wonder of a child, and presently began to play with the buttons on Barnave's coat, spelling out the words engraved on each button: '*Vivre libre ou mourir.*' The Queen related incidents of the journey, such as the murder of Dampierre. The night advanced. The children fell asleep, and voices were lowered. Hours followed which for Barnave were 'Engraved for ever in

his memory,' as he wrote afterwards. Sitting opposite to Marie-Antoinette in the dusk of the lumbering carriage, he answered silently the appeal of the Queen in distress, and was changed, like so many others, by the magic of the woman's charm. But far other were the thoughts of the handsome, insipid Pétion. He published later the monstrous nonsense which was to win him the mockery of posterity. He was convinced that Mme. Elizabeth was pleasantly disturbed by his proximity, and that only circumstances held her from his arms.

Between eleven o'clock and midnight the berlin entered Dormans and drew up in the courtyard of the Hôtel du Louvre. In the night the Dauphin awoke in terror. He had dreamed that he was in a wood. There were wolves there, and his mother seemed to be in peril. He demanded, sobbing and shaking with fear, to be taken to his mother, and it was only when he saw that the nightmare dread was groundless, and that she was safe, that he could go to sleep again. Outside the hotel, all night, a shifting crowd shouted and sang.

Next day, Friday, June 24, they were on the move again by six o'clock, and all along the winding road of the Marne valley to Château-Thierry the crowd accompanied them, refusing to allow the window-blinds to be drawn, since there were always newcomers who must be allowed to gape at the prisoners. There was more conversation on this day. Even Pétion had discovered that the King and Queen were not the monsters he had been led to believe. He conversed with Louis. Barnave played with the Dauphin, who, when they had reached Château-Thierry, was made to cry 'Vive la Nation!' by the

more ferocious of the inhabitants. They went on along the valley, Barnave and Pétion watching each other narrowly during the almost light-hearted conversation; Pétion troubled by the effect upon his feelings of the graciousness of the prisoners, and disturbed at the more open sympathy shown by his companion; Barnave angry at Pétion's presence, which prevented him from exposing his mind to the full, and showing the royal family the course which he hoped they would take on their return. The hills of Jouarre came into sight, where the road turned towards Meaux, and at La Ferté there was a halt for rest and refreshment in the house of the Mayor, by the river side. Here Pétion walked on the terrace with Mme. Elizabeth, keeping all the time an eye on Barnave, who was in the garden with Marie-Antoinette. Then on again to Meaux, harassed and insulted in the villages, and often in fear of violence. The Dauphin frequently crouched against his mother when some terrifying face was thrust in at the window, or when the mob pressed in so close to the berlin that progress was impossible. After another interminable day of suffocating heat they came to rest in the old palace of Bossuet at Meaux. They had been on the road more than fourteen hours. On alighting, Mme. de Tourzel fainted.

They had little appetite, for they knew that the worst part of the journey was to come—the entry into Paris. Meanwhile the halls and passages and gardens of the palace were thronged with a crowd that increased as the night wore on. Peasants were coming in from the outlying hamlets, and many penetrated to the very threshold of the apartments set aside for the prisoners, where the

sentries with difficulty restrained them. They were able to see the King in his dirty shirt—next day he borrowed a clean one from one of the ushers of the three Commissioners. The night was without a breath of air, and the next day broke without a cloud in the sky. Nature itself was adding to the torture of the prisoners. They set off at six o'clock, at a foot-pace, through a heaving mass that billowed to and fro within a foot or two of the berlin. Barnave held the little boy, and was as respectful as ever, but Pétion, in a kind of defiance which may have come from mistrust of himself, behaved like a boor, drinking familiarly with the King and talking loudly. As the morning strengthened the heat became more insufferable than on any of the previous days, and the heavy dust irritated their throats and their eyes. Whenever a man or woman in the crowd dropped out, there were ten to take their place. In the wood of Bondy there was a fight between the mounted escort and the National Guard, and while they were fighting a band of drunkards, many of them women, broke through and raced for the berlin, screaming and menacing. The Queen put her arms about her son to protect him, and a woman shouted, 'What's the use of showing us her child? Everyone knows it's not fat Louis's.' The little boy, terrified at the noise and the brandished weapons, again uttered cries of fear. Barnave, on his feet, tried to cow the ringleaders. He shouted to Dumas, 'Remember, Colonel, you will answer to me with your head for the safety of the royal family.' Order was at last restored, but those in the carriage could imagine what the last few miles of the journey would be like,

with the people becoming more out-of-hand at every step. They came to Pantin, where Lafayette waited with his staff, and suddenly there was no more shouting. The crowd was even denser, and before and behind the hubbub continued, but the berlin itself was met with silence, and to all the other sufferings succeeded humiliation. The astonishing discipline of the Parisians maintained this silence all along the route, and there was a certain majesty in this condemnation which must have been a moral agony to the royal family. '*Le silence des peuples est le leçon des rois.*' It was Paris and not the countryside which taught that lesson, and Barnave, silent in the carriage, understood the magnitude of the task to which he was about to dedicate himself.

The barrier was passed, and the carriage came slowly along the Champs-Élysées between ranks of soldiers with muskets reversed, and tightly wedged lines of citizens who stared but spoke no word. The 'hearse of the Monarchy' a journalist called the berlin. Across the Place Louis XV it crawled, and into the Tuileries gardens, where, on the terrace of the Feuillants, several deputies stood to watch. The silence held, but one of the deputies had guessed from what he saw that there was trouble ahead. He ran into the Manège and warned his colleagues. Commissioners were appointed to proceed at once to the palace.

They arrived not a moment too soon. Like a flood that has been dammed, and at the bursting of the dam is released with a roar, so the restraint of the Parisians broke, and a great murmur of anger penetrated to the Manège. It was as though the storm which had been

gathering for days on the torrid plain of Champagne and under the burning skies of the Marne valley was suddenly loosed in thunder. The National Guard was overrun, Dumas had the uniform torn from his back, and uncontrollable madness was sweeping the crowd, when, at the moment when Lafayette had succeeded in placing a guard round the carriage, the deputies arrived, and the critical moment passed. Nobody uttered a sound as Louis walked from the berlin into the palace. But for the Dauphin there were a few cries of enthusiasm, which he was too exhausted to hear. Two deputies carried him to his apartment, where he was put to bed.

The boy was now past his sixth birthday, and therefore old enough to realise something of what was going on around him, although he was unable to understand the bewildering course which his life took. After Varennes the royal family were virtually prisoners of state. The National Guard not only surrounded the palace and patrolled the gardens, but exercised inside the palace itself the closest and most galling vigilance. There were sentries at the foot of each staircase, at the end of every corridor, outside all the principal rooms. Officers watched and even controlled the movements of the captives. Those appointed to guard the Dauphin kept the keys of his apartments, and when his mother visited him, the officers attached to her accompanied her, and all the formalities of a prison were carried out, as though the soldiers had been warders. For two months and more they were guarded like this, while the Constitution was being prepared, and while those who represented

moderate opinion were trying to save the Monarchy in spite of itself. By a legal fiction it was decreed that the King had not attempted to escape but had been carried off against his will. The mere fact that such a decree could be passed after Varennes proves the strength of the people's attachment to the French Monarchy.

During these days the Dauphin could see that his father and mother, and all the royal household, were under constraint, and could connect this with the unforgettable days and nights between Varennes and Paris. Yet he was still the gay and attractive child whose high spirits were so great a consolation to his father and mother through all their perils and miseries. His chief complaint was that his movements should be so restricted. He missed the drives in the country and, still more, the garden in which he loved to play. He was to return to it soon.

When the King formally accepted the Constitution before the Assembly on September 14th Paris went mad, and many thought that the Revolution was over—among them Mme. de Lamballe, who returned from exile, and was to be butchered within a year. Barnave and his companions, Lameth and Duport, leading the moderates, had succeeded in making many of the deputies realise the importance of maintaining the Monarchy as a central rallying-point against anarchy within and the menace of war without. They did not know that Marie-Antoinette had written to her brother, the Austrian Emperor, ten days before the King accepted the Constitution, and had proposed armed intervention. But for the moment the Monarchy was once more acclaimed. There were illuminations, royalist plays at the theatres, royalist songs in

the streets, and since the King had now no real power, the Assembly could afford to relax the rigour of its control of its prisoners. They were able to leave the palace, to drive through the streets, to walk in the gardens. The Dauphin, now called the Prince Royal, accompanied them. They were cheered at the Opera, and the child may well have wondered at the incalculable emotions of the populace, who must hate and adore by turns.

The new Legislative Assembly met in an atmosphere very different from that of the streets. Those dangerous idealists who are loosely called the Girondins had arrived, to preach a war against Europe. They met for the first time less than a week after Montgolfier had launched his great balloon surmounted by an eagle, on the day when the Tuileries gardens were illuminated, and all Paris from the Chaillot barrier to the Place Louis XV; less than a week after the culmination of the ridiculous rejoicings, when the royal family drove among the people in the evening, to see the fireworks and the dancing and to receive the applause of their subjects.

The Dauphin was now free to resume his games in the gardens, and to return to his own small garden on the quay-side. The Abbé d'Avaux once more took charge of his education, but, as before, the King and Queen supervised many of his lessons. Mme. de Tourzel was his faithful companion, and has included in her memoirs many stories of his amiability and his affection during these last happy days of his life. From his questions, it is obvious that he now knew a good deal of the sufferings of his parents. By the winter of 1792 he had heard the *Ça Ira* sung in the streets, and seen the ragged crowds



which now invaded the palace gardens. While he played, the war rolled nearer. The chivalrous Barnave and his friends were corresponding with the Queen, with Jarjayes as intermediary. Fersen was plotting beyond the frontier. Then, in May of 1792, the Assembly, on a motion of Gensonné, dismissed the King's Guard. And on June 20 the mob broke into the Tuileries.

The day of June 20, in which the Dauphin was to play his part, was one of those sudden risings of the people for which various explanations have been given. No single explanation is the true one, for, as in all those acts of the revolutionary mob, the motives were mixed. There were idlers, there were paid agitators, there were those who wanted Roland and his friends recalled, there were some who hoped to do violence to the King and Queen, and there were many who believed the pretext that the third anniversary of the Tennis Court oath was to be celebrated by the planting of a Tree of Liberty in the palace gardens. Anyhow, soon after dawn some thousands were on the march from the faubourgs. A deputation demanded admittance to the Assembly, and Vergniaud and Guadet supported the demand. There were torrents of eloquence from the armed deputation, most of whom were crazed with adulterated wine. Aulard describes the scene as burlesque. But what followed was not burlesque.

Led by the paid scum of the brothels and drink shops, a crowd which included mere sightseers came clattering and pushing up the stairs of the palace to the King's apartments. They crossed the ante-chamber and, finding the door ahead of them locked, began to hack it with

their hatchets and axes. The splintered door opened, and Louis XVI stood before them. To their amazement he showed no slightest sign of fear, nor even of annoyance. When they pressed forward through the door, filling the great room, he was forced slowly backwards, until he came to a wooden chest which stood in the bay of a window. Upon this he mounted, and asked them what they wanted. They bawled 'Get rid of your priests! Recall the Ministers! Sanction the decrees!' They threatened him, and let loose upon him a storm of vile-ness. He told them that this was neither the time nor place to accede to their requests, but that he was as much a patriot as any of them. To emphasise his words he took a red cap of liberty from one of them, and clapped it on his head. Somebody thrust a bayonet at him, but a soldier knocked it up, and when those nearest to him tried to reassure him as to their good intentions, he said to the soldier Gessé, 'Come, put your hand on my heart, and you will know if I am afraid.' As the room became more suffocatingly hot, and the stench increased, he asked for a glass of wine. A man held out a bottle, and he drank from the neck. His stupendous courage and that simple good-nature which endeared him to all who met him took the fury out of the mob, and the tempest died down. The ferocious vanguard felt ridiculous, and the sightseers began to wander about the palace, gazing at the furniture and the pictures. Meanwhile in the apartments of the Queen the Dauphin sat on a long table drawn up as a barricade. Behind it stood his mother and her ladies. Soldiers of the National Guard were ranged in front of the table. For long hours a crowd of men and women

passed to and fro, staring at the Queen and her ladies, shouting insults at them, and parading, one a small gallows with a doll attached to it, and beneath it the words: 'For Marie-Antoinette'; another a plank with the bloody heart of an ox on it, and round it the words: 'The heart of Louis XVI.' The filthiest language of the gutter was hurled at the little group, but the Queen and her ladies showed no less courage than the King. They handed her a red bonnet, and she placed it on her son's head. It was much too big for him, and he was already suffering acutely from the heat and from fear, as well as from exhaustion. But he endured it all. Sometimes a woman would stop to speak to his mother. One ragged creature was more violent than the others. Marie-Antoinette said, 'Have you ever seen me? Have I ever done you any harm?' The woman answered, 'It is you who have made the people unhappy.' The Queen replied, 'They have told you that, but they lied to you. I am the wife of a King of France, and the mother of a Dauphin. I am French. I was happy when my people loved me.' Whereupon the woman began to cry. 'I didn't know,' she said; 'I see that you are a good woman.'

Santerre, the brewer from the Faubourg St. Antoine, later to be Commander of the National Guard, took pity on the little boy. 'Take the child's bonnet off,' he cried to a soldier, 'it's too hot for him.' Then he pointed to the Queen and the Dauphin, and bade the crowd look well at them. But the effect of his words was not what he anticipated. Calm courage in adversity had changed the heart of such a mob as this on more than one occasion. And now men and women began to find something to

admire in the fortitude of the victims. Both the King and the Queen had defeated them, and there were now cheers for the royal family. But Louis was equal to the occasion once more: 'I've had the doors of the gallery thrown open,' he said loudly. 'On their way out the people will be able to see the apartments.' And he stood to watch them pass out, many with ashamed looks, some speechless with anger, a few beaming with affection. Santerre, watching the humiliating retreat, murmured, 'The thing has failed.' Pétion, too, arriving at the eleventh hour to pretend that he had but now been informed of what was toward, received from Louis the cold welcome which his hypocrisy merited. It had been a day of victory for the royal family, but of moral victory only. Its only result was to infuriate still more the enemies of the Monarchy. They had not obtained from the King the promises they required. They had not succeeded in intimidating him. They therefore pretended that the outbreak had merely been a friendly visit to the King. Thus the papers spoke of it. But from now on it was war to the knife. For a considerable body of opinion swung round to the side of the moderates when it became known how Louis had held himself on June 20. The Jacobins, denounced by Lafayette, raged. But the Queen hated Lafayette, and refused to trust him; even betrayed him—and to Pétion of all ineffectual humbugs.

Louis-Charles had seen his mother weeping when the mob had left the palace on June 20, and he lived now in a vague fear of something that his mother and father seemed to expect with certainty. On July 14 he was taken to the Champ-de-Mars, dressed, by his mother's

request, in the uniform of the National Guard, and he heard the people shouting for his father's death, and praising Pétion. 'Pétion, then, is King to-day!' he said. The boy's uniform was pointed out to the hero of the day, and Pétion said, 'Yes, he must accustom himself to wearing our uniform.'

It was now no longer safe for the royal family to go out into Paris. They were in danger even in their own gardens, which were invaded at all hours by the people. Daily the soldiers of the National Guard, who might have protected the King and Queen from insult and from the fear of attack, grew more openly hostile. Along the terrace of the Feuillants was draped a long, broad ribbon in the three colours. On the trees at the edge of the terrace were written such phrases as 'Citizens, keep your self-respect. Give this feeble barrier the strength of bayonets.' The terrace was called 'Territory of Liberty,' and the rest of the garden 'Territory of Coblenz.' Away in its remote corner of the prescribed territory the garden of Louis-Charles ran to seed, and he himself could no longer venture there. Sometimes the curious paid a visit to the withered flowers and overgrown paths, but if they were seen they were in danger of being manhandled. Once, on a Tuesday at the end of July, he went with his mother to the derelict spot, and a menacing crowd approached them. Four officers were in time to rescue them, and to hurry them back to the palace. Louis-Charles knew after that why he could no longer go out to play his games. On another occasion, when a less extremist battalion was on duty, Mme. de Tourzel took him to his garden, and brought him back under sure

escort, without accident. But with the arrival of the men of Marseilles the crowds became bolder, and roamed beneath the windows of the Queen's apartments, singing revolutionary songs and crying threats, and the boy was kept in his room. As he sat by the window, disconsolately looking out on the summer weather, his tutor and his governess tried to disguise from him the gravity of the situation. They told him stories, and improvised games for him. At this time the Queen was so carelessly protected that she decided to sleep in her son's room, which made him very happy. He knew that she was in danger, and knew also that he was a great consolation to her in her misery.

In the terrible days before August 10 there was a last attempt made to give the Dauphin fresh air and exercise. He was taken to the house of the Marquise de Lède, an isolated building at the end of one of the faubourgs. There was another child there, and in the garden Louis-Charles played his last untroubled games before the Monarchy was swept away.

On the evening of August 9 he saw men standing to arms in the galleries and ante-chambers of the palace. When they came to take him to bed he noticed that there were tears in his mother's eyes. He said to her, 'Why do you cry when you say good-night to me? Why do they want to hurt my father? He's such a good man.' He slept through some of that tragic vigil, but was awakened early by the Queen, and found commotion all about him. Presently he was taken downstairs. He could hear a distant sound of conflict, but he was glad to emerge into the gardens. He was between Mme. de Tourzel and

his mother, each holding a hand. In front went his father. Behind him came his sister and Mme. Elizabeth. As they went along the broad central alley, Louis-Charles amused himself by kicking his feet in the leaves which lay in thick heaps here and there. The King remarked that they were falling early this year. La Rochefoucauld, who accompanied this mournful procession, noticed that the Dauphin did not seem to be afraid. But as they approached the Manège, the crowd pressed in upon them from the terrace, and swarmed on the steps, and a soldier took up the boy in his arms and carried him the rest of the way.

Shortly after eight o'clock in the morning the King entered the Manège and placed himself and his family under the protection of the representatives of the people. They were then accommodated in a small box, with a grille in front of it, which had been used by newspaper reporters. In this confined space they sat for nearly eighteen hours; all through the morning of strengthening sunshine, through the blaze of mid-day, through the burning afternoon, and on into the stifling evening. Hour by hour of all those eighteen hours the hall grew hotter, and when the cool of evening came, the lit candles made the place only more intolerably hot. They heard the noise of the storming of the palace, and could watch the interminable debate that followed the surrender of the Swiss and the triumph of the people. They saw the entry of the victors, men and women covered with blood, and brandishing trophies from the royal apartments. The suspension of the King was voted. In brawling and in uproar the slow hours passed, and the Dauphin dozed, overcome by the heat. La Rochefoucauld saw him lying

across his mother's knees, with his head against Mme. de Tourzel, in the back of the box. It was two o'clock in the morning when they were released from their long agony, and half pushed, half carried from the door of the Manège to the dilapidated cells in the old monastery of the Feuillants which had been placed at their disposal. The Dauphin, waking for a moment, recalled to his mother her promise that he should sleep in her room that night. There was little sleep for the others. The unresting crowd prowled in the darkness, while the King and Queen kept an anxious watch until dawn broke. Then, with the perils of the night past, the King lay down in his clothes upon the bed in the corner of his cell, next to that of the Queen. She too ceased to pace the brick floor, and took some rest, while Mme. Elizabeth awoke and dressed the children, for whom a change of linen had been sent by Lady Gower, the British Ambassador's wife. The Dauphin asked for news of his dog Moufflet, and the Queen, waking at the sound of his voice, said, 'My poor children! What a heritage we are leaving them! *Tout finit avec nous.*' While she made her toilet some of the ladies arrived, anxious to serve her, and she said to her son, 'You see, there are consolations. The friends I have lost in my unhappiness were not the equal of these.'

At ten o'clock on this Saturday morning they were brought out into the corridor upon which their cells opened, and led back under guard to the Riding School, where they were to pass another day of agony. The decision of the Assembly that, the Tuileries being no longer inhabitable, the royal family should be housed in



the Luxembourg was debated at great length, and with violence. For the Assembly now had the new Commune to deal with, and these men who had come into power on the night of the 10th, when the tocsin rang, were determined to carry out their policy, and to imprison the royal family. They refused to consider the Luxembourg, since escape by the underground passages would be easy. The Archbishop's palace, the Ministry of Justice were suggested. The Commune again objected. It must be the Temple. The Assembly did not surrender without a fight, but the result was a foregone conclusion. All Saturday and all Sunday the debates continued; the deputations crowded into the Riding School, the mob waited outside. Each evening the prisoners had to pass among the raging citizens to reach their hard beds, and each evening they went in danger of their lives. The little boy, between intervals of dozing and waking, heard the perpetual noise, and saw the misery on the faces of those he loved. But what he himself was enduring must have seemed but a repetition of the journey to Paris in October, the return from Varennes, the tumult of June 20; something which he could not explain, but which was evidently part of his life. He did know, however, that there were people who hated his parents; and this he could not understand.

*Tout finit avec nous.* By the afternoon of the 13th, Monday, it was all over. The Commune had won its victory, and now had the royal family in its keeping. Louis was asked to draw up a list of those whom he wished to accompany him; and there was a long discussion with Pétion, at the end of which a reduced number was

allowed. By five o'clock two large carriages waited outside the Feuillants—but they were drawn by only two horses each, and the drivers were dressed not in the royal livery, but in grey. Pétion and Manuel, the latter representing the Commune, kept their hats on, and showed as little respect as possible for their prisoners. The journey of a mile and a half took two hours, and though by now the King and Queen were accustomed to such scenes, there was a new note in the voices of those who pressed about the carriages, sweeping the National Guard before them—a note of victory. This time there was no doubt about the issue. The Commune was taking no chances. In the Place Vendôme there was a halt, so that the King might see the statue of Louis XIV, which had been torn down. The Dauphin, standing between his father's knees, peered through the window and said that these were indeed villainous men. But the King corrected him, telling him that they were not wicked men, but dupes. Every street along the way was packed with shouting men and women, and when the carriages drew near the Temple the progress became even slower, as the massed thousands swarmed up from side-streets and alleys. It was after seven o'clock when the carriages came at length to the tall pillars of the entrance and turned through the main gateway into the forecourt of the Temple. Here awaited them Santerre with his soldiers and the members of the Commune, with their friends, to see the spectacle. The King dismounted first in the great court bounded by an alley of trees, and, followed by his family and attendants, went up the ten steps of the palace of the Grand Prior, which had been the residence of Artois before his emigra-

tion. The lights were lit and the place had a festive air, and Louis was not ill-pleased. The proximity of a crowd of soldiers and tradesmen and minor officials never inconvenienced him very much, and with great good humour he talked to them, and began to allot the various apartments to his household. Nobody apparently had the heart to tell him that his prison was to be the massive grey tower which he had seen above the trees at the end of the court; and that he was merely being accommodated here for an hour or two until his quarters had been made ready. But the Queen and Mme. Elizabeth and Mme. de Tourzel had hoped for a moment's repose, and were horrified to see in every room a gaping crowd. The Dauphin, at the end of his strength, asked only to be put to bed. Mme. de Tourzel was told that his room was not ready, so she laid him down upon a couch, where he at once fell into a deep sleep. At ten o'clock a banquet was served in the huge room where Artois had given his suppers, and the Dauphin was awakened. He took a mouthful or two, but his head drooped, and Mme. de Tourzel lifted him from the table, and nursed him while he slept once more.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST WEEKS IN THE TEMPLE PRISON

WHOEVER to-day walks up the rue du Temple in Paris towards the Place de la République will find upon his right a square, and north of this square a tangle of short and narrow streets, many of them still bearing the names by which they were known during the Revolution. On the south-eastern edge of the square, where the rue Eugène Spuller meets the wider rue de Bretagne, stood the famous Tower which was once so familiar to Parisians who looked towards the northern heights of their town. For it rose above the intervening houses, a high square tower, unornamented, crowned with a slate roof, and having its foundations in the thirteenth century. Westwards of it stood the palace of the Grand Prior of the Order, and northwards, extending almost to the present Place de la République, were the various monastic buildings, shops, dwelling-houses and other dependencies, with the round church of the Templars in the midst. It had remained a vast enclosure, an island, the property, until the Revolution, of the French kings, with a population of something like 4,000 within its walls; but originally it had been an autonomous city within a city, enjoying its special privileges and customs, and having its own market. To this place had come, in the early years of the thirteenth century,

those who inherited the traditions of the first loosely organised bands of monks and knights who vowed themselves to the protection of pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre. More than fifty years before, the Council of Troyes had officially recognised the Order, and approved of its constitution, and the Order had then set to work to build its European headquarters in the capital of St. Louis. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Philippe le Bel dissolved the Order, and from then on the settlement was the property of the French Crown. So it was that Artois, the brother of Louis XVI, had made it his residence, and had housed his dependents within its walls.

The royal family ate their meal in silence. Manuel stood behind the King's chair. The food and wine were of the best, the service excellent, with Turgy, Marchand and Chrétien fulfilling the task which they had performed at the Tuileries. But the King and Queen knew that a bridge had been crossed, and that this formal banquet, at which was observed the ceremonial to which they were accustomed, was in reality a monstrous burlesque. They feared what was to come, for they had noticed a new insolence in those about them.

While the meal was in progress Pétion had gone to the Commune to make his report. He mentioned that as the Tower was not ready for the prisoners, he had taken it upon himself to authorise them to remain for the present in the palace. The Commune replied, shortly and with vigour, that their decision could not be changed. The Tower it must be. As, however, the place was not ready, the Commune ordered that the prisoners should be lodged

temporarily in a kind of annexe, called the Little Tower. It was nothing but a low penthouse built against the great square tower, and decorated with two useless and ridiculous pointed turrets. It contained furnished rooms, and was the home and office of the archivist Berthélemy. He was about to retire for the night when an official of the Commune, accompanied by a number of workmen, arrived to inform him that he must get out at once, to make way for the royal family. Before he had time to protest the workmen began to carry out his furniture and his papers, while others brought in piles of coverlets and mattresses for the new tenants. Berthélemy was hustled out and put into the street. He spent the whole night seeking shelter—unsuccessfully.

It was nearly midnight when an official informed Mme. de Tourzel that the Dauphin's room was ready for him. Since she did not know where to go, she allowed the man to pick up the sleeping child. The man walked so rapidly that Mme. de Tourzel and Mme. de Saint-Brice could not keep up with him. They followed him out of the palace and along the dark covered passage which led to the Tower. The passage narrowed and grew darker, but they could hear his footsteps ahead, ringing on the stone. They stumbled into a room, and then up three flights of stairs, and finally rejoined the man in a small, low chamber which had been the billiard-room of Berthélemy. Some of his furniture remained, and one or two of his pictures, and there were two beds. In one of these Mme. de Tourzel laid the little boy, whose sleep had not been disturbed, while she herself sat down in one of the armchairs, fearing that the child was to be separated from

his parents. After midnight, however, Marie-Antoinette came quietly into the room, and stood watching her son as he slept. Then she went to the adjoining room, where her daughter had a camp-bed. She herself lay down on the bed of the archivist. Mme. de Lamballe lay in a windowless box of a place between the Dauphin's room and his mother's. Louis XVI, who never lost his appetite or his capacity for sleep, had a bed on the second floor, and his two valets, Hue and Chamilly, sat in chairs, one on either side of him. In the kitchen Mme. Elizabeth and Pauline de Tourzel remained awake all night, for between them and the King was the guard-room, and the men on duty did not trouble to lower their voices. So passed the first night in prison.

A well-to-do bourgeois would have found the apartments comfortable and pleasant, for Berthélemy was a man of taste. But to men and women brought up in a palace they seemed intolerable. Let the reader call up for a moment the splendour of those enormous halls wherein the royal family passed their lives; the innumerable servants; the details of ceremony and etiquette which spared them the smallest physical inconvenience; the sense of power to which everything from the smile of a courtier to the obeisance of a Minister contributed. Then let the reader imagine the indignity of those small rooms, with all that was left of the royal household huddled together in confusion, closely guarded.

Led by the Queen, they began at once to make the best of it. She refused the waiting-maids sent by the Commune, saying that she did not wish to have more strangers about her than was necessary. Had they foreseen what

was to come upon them, these first days of their captivity might not have seemed to them so unbearable. For at first they had their friends around them, some remnant of ceremonial was observed, they were in no great discomfort. The prison-service was not yet organised, and they could walk in the garden, or go to inspect the changes which were being made in the Tower by Palloi and his workmen. Tradespeople called and orders were given for clothes, furniture, toys and so on—the Assembly having voted half a million livres for the expenses of the household. Good food and good wine in plenty were served—(there was a kitchen staff of 13)—and they could order their time more or less as they pleased. The Dauphin was once more able to enjoy fresh air and to play his games. His mother, who feared that he might be kidnapped, or separated from her, always accompanied him wherever he went.

But the Commune was preparing to strike, and the first blow was delivered within a week of the imprisonment of the royal family. There had been a warning. While the prisoners were at dinner, an official had announced that all their attendants were to be dismissed, and that in future they would be allowed only those chosen by Pétion and Manuel. Louis replied with such force that the official left the room without saying any more. But the Commune was not beaten as easily as that. Its members were ridden by the fear that, somehow or other, the prisoners would be rescued, and stories were already abroad in Paris that a boy resembling the Dauphin had been substituted for him some time before. Royalist plots were reported daily, and the Commune decided to



organise a rigid control of the prisoners. The first step must be to separate them from all the friends whose fidelity had so far withstood every test. And so, on the night of August 19, the Commune struck. Even the valets, Hue and Chamilly, were ordered to leave the Temple. The Queen pleaded with the officials, but to no purpose. There was a pitiful scene of parting, through which the Dauphin slept. Then Mme. de Lamballe, Mme. de Tourzel and her daughter, and the other faithful friends and attendants were led across the garden and the fore-court and into the street, where carriages awaited them, to convey them to the Force prison. Only Hue was allowed to return on the next morning. From now on the Commune set about organising the routine of the prison. The guard was relieved daily, and the sentries were doubled. They were to keep the prisoners under observation day and night, report on their conversations, refuse admittance to anyone without an official pass. Their walks in the garden were limited to a small space, until such time as Palloi should have doubled the height of the surrounding wall. An officer accompanied them. Tison, who had been a toll-house clerk, and his wife were sent in by Pétion, ostensibly to do household work, but in reality to spy. And Cléry, who had been the Dauphin's valet at Versailles and at the Tuileries, replaced Hue at his own request.

The daily life of the royal family at this time was an unceasing effort to avoid, even for a brief moment, the supervision of the guards. After August 20 the Dauphin slept in his mother's room, on a new bed with hangings of patterned cretonne. In order to have a few moments alone with him, before the day guard entered the room,

she awoke him at six o'clock, or even earlier, dressed him herself, and made him say his prayers. He was then taken up to his father's room, with his sister and aunt, where breakfast was eaten. At ten o'clock they all came down to the Queen's room, and Louis put the Dauphin through his lessons—grammar, Latin, history, poetry, geography. His method of teaching geography was to give the boy a roughly sketched map, with mountains, cities, rivers and frontiers marked upon it. The pupil then filled in the names. For poetry, the King chose passages from Corneille and Racine, which he would recite, with a running commentary. Sometimes he dictated from *L'Esprit de la Ligue*, and corrected the boy's notebook. In another part of the room, the Queen and Mme. Elizabeth would be teaching Mme. Royale. At about one o'clock there was a walk in the garden, under supervision. In the restricted space the Dauphin could run and jump to his heart's content. He had large balloons, a cup and ball, a whipping-top, kites, ninepins, rackets and balls. Cléry often helped to amuse him. At two o'clock the mid-day meal was served in the King's room, and afterwards Louis dozed in a chair. When he awoke, the Dauphin would repeat his lessons to him, or practise writing, after which he would be allowed to play draughts or dominoes with Cléry or with his aunt, until seven o'clock. At that hour the family gathered round a table and Mme. Elizabeth and Marie-Antoinette took turns to read aloud, until eight o'clock, the hour of the Dauphin's supper. During the meal the King would often read out one of the problems from the *Mercure de France*, and all would try to solve it. It was then bedtime for the Dauphin.

Before undressing he repeated aloud certain prayers which his mother had taught him—but only when the guards were out of hearing. If they were near at hand, he whispered the prayers for the protection of his family and their friends. In the early part of the night his mother and aunt sat by his bedside, eating certain dishes sent by the King, who supped alone. The King himself then came to bid his son good-night, and retired to his room, where he read until eleven o'clock, while the women did needlework or repaired clothing.

It was noticed that, although the Dauphin was still lively and talkative, he was well aware of the misfortunes of his parents. He was now seven and a half years old, and could intercept anxious looks exchanged and overhear phrases which were not intended for his ears. His deep affection for his parents taught him to avoid giving them pain by drawing attention to their present plight and contrasting it with the life of former days. He never made any reference to Versailles or to the Tuileries, though he must have remembered his garden, the drives into the country with his mother, the ease and comfort of his life, the friendly faces that had surrounded him. In their place he now saw the faces of those whom the Commune sent to the Temple—many of them riff-raff, delighted with the chance of insulting royalty and of restricting still further the liberties of the prisoners; the friends or the creatures of two of the most abominable men of the time: Hébert and Chaumette, the adventurers who ran the Commune. It must be remembered that the Commissioners had their orders not to allow the prisoners out of their sight. These orders most of them carried out with the greatest

pleasure, and the little boy could see how distasteful their presence was to his parents. One of them, Leclerc, one day interrupted a lesson to say that the child ought to be given a sound republican education. Another, Godard, reported that, under cover of teaching the Prince his multiplication tables, Louis was showing him how to write in code. The General Council of the Commune was so impressed with this piece of detective work, and so convinced that a conspiracy was on foot, that arithmetic was henceforward forbidden. On a third occasion the Queen was interrupted in the middle of the story of the Constable of Bourbon's treason, and told that she had chosen this passage to inspire the boy with hatred of his country. But the Commissioners, who served their turn in alphabetical order as warders, were not all like this. Some were kindly shop-keepers, others clerks without any strong political bias, others countrymen whom the spectacle of so much suffering revolted. And when the Dauphin saw a face he recognised, and knew that it belonged to one of the less tyrannous of the warders, he would run to his parents with the good news.

Without understanding the importance of what was happening in the world outside, the Dauphin could detect whether the news that drifted in was good or bad, from the expressions on the faces of his elders; for they were not able always to control their joy or their disappointment. Their only hope was the success of the invasion, and that success, at first, seemed assured. Taking the utmost precaution, and risking their lives twenty times a day, Hue and Turgy, who served the King at table, had organised a system of keeping the prisoners informed of

the news. Both were allowed to leave the Temple, and Hue would collect his information at various houses belonging to royalists. A note would be passed to Turgý in the kitchens, where the Commissioners prodded and tasted the dishes, examined the carafes, and even split open the rolls of bread. But from the kitchens in the palace to the Tower was a considerable distance, and Turgý always found an opportunity to hide a message. Afterwards he would indicate its presence by a sign with the fingers or a lift of an eyebrow. Later on, a complete code of this kind was worked out, when it became increasingly difficult to pass written notes.

In these first weeks of imprisonment the royal family heard of the advance of Brunswick and Condé and Saxe-Teschen, but what they did not know was the effect of the famous manifesto upon the French, and the rage that greeted the news of the capitulation of Longwy. They did not appreciate that they were now traitors in league with the enemy, nor hear the great voice of Danton calling to the young soldiers. The Revolution had now passed from theory into action, and Paris throbbed to the rhythm of the *Marseillaise*. The men who had seen a vision of Liberty had a new Europe to make. The old Europe had grown weary, and one of its greatest achievements, the French Monarchy, had felt the doom of all mortal things. It had passed through its magnificent morning, and through its noontide blaze of glory, and then the meaning had gone out of all that valour and majesty, and the darkness had begun to fall upon it. Those who now represented so many centuries of ordered splendour, its last heirs, awaited their deliverance at the hands of their country's

enemies, and black night closed over them. Then suddenly it was dawn, and a new sunrise of glory greeted the young gunners in the fields of Champagne. The bugle-call of Valmy echoed round the world.

On September 2, the Sunday on which the massacres began, Louis XVI was standing at a window, watching the demolition of some of the old buildings in the neighbourhood of the tower. Beside him stood one of the Commissioners of the Commune, a sculptor named Danjou. The King was laughing and pointing out each fresh fall of masonry, when the distant sound of a gun firing three shots interrupted him. Later in the day, as the family walked in the garden, they heard in the distance the noise of a marching mob, and they were hurried indoors. Two Commissioners arrived to arrest Hue and take him to the Conciergerie, and from them the prisoners heard that Verdun had fallen. 'The tocsin is sounding,' said the Commissioner Mathieu, 'the enemy is at our gates. Blood will be shed, but yours shall be the first.' The little Dauphin, frightened at the unceasing din, now closer to the prison, and also at the distress of his parents, had but a broken sleep that night, and on the next day heard with disappointment and mystification that there was to be no walk in the garden on that day. He must play indoors, if he could find any of the family so little preoccupied as to devote an hour to his amusement. But it was not long before he understood the reason for the order. The shouting which had disturbed his rest broke out again in the distance, and drew nearer, until it was quite close at hand, in the surrounding streets. The mob, roaring songs, swept up to

the gates of the Temple, clamouring for admittance. They overwhelmed the sentries and burst in a flood across the forecourt and the garden. In their midst was a man who carried, as though it were a standard, a bloody pike with a severed head upon it. His comrades jostled beside him, and the whole mass swayed to and fro, not knowing which was the Queen's window. For they were determined that she should look once more on the face of her friend, Mme. de Lamballe. On the ground floor of the Little Tower Cléry was at dinner with Tison and his wife. Mme. Tison, looking up, saw the head thrust close to the window, and uttered a cry of terror. The crowd, thinking it was the Queen who cried out, gathered round the window and yelled and gesticulated. Meanwhile, from an upper window, the King had seen the head of the dead woman, and he stepped in front of the Queen, who fainted.

Danjou, a man of energy, a revolutionary who thought that the Revolution had dishonoured itself enough already, had summoned help from the Commune as soon as it was known that the mob was marching on the Temple, and had expressed his intention of using force, if necessary, to protect the prisoners. He himself went out to harangue the people, many of them maddened by drink, and it says much for his courage and the force of his personality that he finally succeeded in turning them out of the Temple without employing arms. He described his speech as 'ridiculous,' but it achieved its purpose. He told them that if they showed that they were afraid to grant a fair trial to the prisoners, everybody would believe in their innocence; and he flattered them grossly,

extolling their courage, and bidding them remember that such glorious spoils of victory belonged not to them, but to the entire city of Paris. He dropped the magic words 'Palais-Royal,' and off they went, some sullenly, but the majority contented enough. And when it was all over Pétion arrived—too late, as was his custom.

The loss of her faithful friend, due to that very fidelity, and the peril and strain of the day had shaken the Queen, and had made her realise that the comparative tranquillity of her life in prison was a deception. She now knew that the advance of the invading armies to save her might bring about her death. Either way, in victory or defeat, there seemed to be no hope remaining. The Dauphin, crying bitterly at the sight of his mother's despair, and understanding dimly that even this new life to which he had become accustomed was not to last, knew only that he was a consolation to his parents, and clung the more closely to them.

The routine of their lives was taken up again, but there was a deeper shadow over them now. Louis XVI, cheated of the money voted by the Assembly, employed what little he could obtain in paying debts, and in buying toys for the boy, as a reward for lessons well learnt. The Prussians were apparently still advancing. Perhaps there was hope, after all. But while they resumed the normal course of their lives, reading, talking, walking in the garden, teaching the children, their fate was being decided in that countryside through which their heavy coach had rumbled more than a year ago. For while the newly elected National Convention was holding its first meeting in the Tuileries, Kellermann and Dumouriez



halted the invasion, and heard the cheers of the ragged soldiers who were to fill Europe with the names of their victories for twenty years to come. On the next day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, while the Dauphin sat with his parents, there was a sound of trumpets, and then a great stillness. Lubin had come from the Commune to announce the abolition of the Monarchy, on a motion of Collot d'Herbois in the Convention, and the foundation of the Republic. The words of the proclamation were very clear, for Lubin, surrounded by mounted police, stood outside the Tower. The child saw no sign on the faces of his parents that they were taking any notice of the proclamation. For Hébert happened to be there, at the door of the room, hoping to see humiliation and anger. He was to be disappointed. The King had a book in his hand, and he did not interrupt his reading. Marie-Antoinette was sewing. She continued to sew. Cléry went to the window, was mistaken for Louis, and had insults bawled at him by the crowd which had collected below. That same evening Cléry, bidden by Louis to apply for curtains and warmer coverings for the Dauphin's bed, against the autumn weather, began his application with the usual formula: '*Le roi demande . . .*,' and was told that the title had been abolished, and that he was affronting the people. A day or two later the workman who had made a cupboard at the Tuileries, in which Louis wished to hide his more important papers, took the story to Roland, and the papers were seized. Not long afterwards the Dauphin heard his parents discussing the probable effect on them of this discovery. One day he said, 'Mama, you see that grand brioche, I know of a

cupboard here where I will put it, if you like. It will be perfectly safe, I promise you. Nobody will be able to take it out.' The Queen said, 'I don't see any cupboard, dear.' The Dauphin pointed his finger at his mouth. 'Here it is,' said he.

On September 29 it became evident that the prisoners were henceforth to be treated much more rigorously. A decree was read out depriving them of writing materials, and the Dauphin, who was present, saw his parents hand over pencils, ink, pens, paper, and watched the officials searching the rooms and looking into cupboards and wardrobes. But worse was to follow that evening. Cléry had warned the King three days before that he alone was to be moved to the Tower, leaving his family behind him. That evening of the 29th, as he was about to mount the stairs to his room, this new decree was read out to him. He was informed that this was the only way to prevent the 'escape of the traitors.' Cléry went with his master, and the two weeping women and the boy were left to guess what worse things might befall them at any moment. Next day the Queen lost her self-control, and there was a scene with the guards. Cléry, after being refused permission to attend the Dauphin, was allowed to accompany an official to the Little Tower to get some books for the King. He found the family in tears, the little boy and the girl stunned by the mother's grief. He gave them news of his master, and Marie-Antoinette, yielding herself to the wildest grief, begged the Commissioner to take her to her husband. Simon, of whom we shall hear more, was present, and is said to have been touched by the tears of the woman. I doubt it. But others were moved, and



from that time the family took their principal meal of the day together, and Cléry was allowed to attend the Dauphin. As was natural, however, the surveillance became more intense. All correspondence was forbidden, and Cléry had increasing difficulty in obtaining news for the prisoners, for he was watched as closely as anyone. A young guard was imprisoned for twenty-four hours for having spoken to him while on duty.

Had news come to the prisoners daily, it could but have added to their distress. It was to be almost a month before the family was moved into the Great Tower, to join the King; a month of growing anxiety during which they asked themselves what was the object of the separation. They seemed to be completely at the mercy of some power which struck from the outer darkness, suddenly, and at a whim. During that month the Mountain and the Gironde prepared for the conflict which was to decide whether theorists or men of action were better fitted to carry on a war. Brunswick's men trudged through the soggy fields of Champagne, abandoning Longwy and Verdun. Custine rode into the Rhineland towns; Montesquiou was received in jubilation by the Savoyards; Anselme captured Nice; Dumouriez was back in Paris, filling the salons with talk of a conquest of Belgium, and laying his plans in that house in the rue Chantierine where the stroke of Brumaire was to be prepared some years later. It was the period of mounting enthusiasm, when the successes of the ill-organised rabble armies made a few men dream of what might come when those young soldiers had been annealed.

For the Dauphin the days passed much as before, since

he was allowed to be with his father during the daytime, and could continue his lessons, and his games in the garden. But autumn drew on and the darkness that fell earlier each evening increased that vague fear which was in the very air he breathed. Manuel had an interview with his father, and confiscated all his orders and decorations, and there was an anxious evening when Cléry was arrested and taken away. It seemed that they were to lose their most useful servitor. He was questioned in the matter of a note which he was accused of having received from a guard. There was no proof, and he returned to the Temple late at night, and to the great joy of the prisoners. And then, a few days later, the Dauphin was told that the family was to be reunited in the Tower, and a rare happiness restored to them a hope that the worst of their trials—separation—might be over. On October 25, officials and police escorted the Queen, Mme. Elizabeth, Mme. Royale and the Dauphin to the new quarters which had been prepared for them. Being within call of each other once more, and having the King among them, they took new courage.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DAUPHIN IN THE TOWER; THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF LOUIS XVI

THE main Tower which the royal family occupied from October 25, 1792, was a massive square building, about 150 feet high, with walls 9 feet thick, and with a pyramidal roof of slate. At each of its four corners was a smaller tower, with a roof of the same shape. There were four storeys, each of which had formerly consisted of one vast room. A winding staircase, in one of the corner towers, connected the storeys. At the summit of the building there was a kind of narrow battlemented walk. The ground floor was used as a room for the officials of the Commune, and was rather grandly called the Council Chamber. It was here that the Commissioners of the Commune ate, slept and passed their leisure hours when off duty. They were chosen in alphabetical order at each day's session of the Commune, four at a time, for a forty-eight hour stretch of duty. On their arrival, they relieved four of their comrades. There were always eight on duty, with reliefs taking place each twenty-four hours. In this room the reports were drawn up, passports examined and the business of internal administration carried out. The eight men were called the Council of the Temple. From the stone floor of this room sprang the

shaft of a great column, and the high ceiling was vaulted. Four beds were set against the walls for the Commissioners. The three small rooms formed by three of the corner towers were used respectively as an armoury, a closet, and a place to keep logs. In the fourth tower the staircase mounted. To climb to the battlement one had to pass through seven wicket-gates, and on each landing were two heavy doors, the first of oak, studded with nails, the second of iron.

The first storey served as the guard-room. Planks with mattresses on them were used as beds, and round the pillar in the middle of the room the arms were piled. The second storey had been divided into four separate rooms with wooden partitions, and ceilings of cloth stretched across. These were the apartments of Louis XVI. The anteroom, entered from the stairs through the wooden and iron doors, each with a strong lock and four bolts, was papered. The window, on the right of the entrance, was barred like all the others, and had an exterior fixed shutter. From this ante-chamber three doors led into the bedroom of the King, the bedroom of Cléry and the dining-room. The first was papered in bright yellow, and contained a fireplace, a four-poster bed with curtains of green damask, a folding-bed for the Dauphin, candlesticks, a clock, chairs, and so on. The second was furnished similarly. The third, visible from the ante-chamber through a glass door, had a folding table, five cane-chairs and a couple of cupboards. The western turret, adjoining the King's bedroom, was used as his study and oratory. It had a table and two chairs, and was warmed by a little stove. The only other heating arrange-

ment for the four rooms was a larger stove in the deep embrasure of the anteroom window. Long pipes carried from the stoves to the outside of the building vented the smoke. A narrow passage led from the King's bedroom to the water-closets in the southern turret.

The third storey also had been divided into four rooms. There was the same ante-chamber, entered through the two doors. It led into the bedroom of the Queen and Mme. Royale, which was slightly larger than the King's bedroom below it, as there was no corridor outside it. Next to this, and over Cléry's room, was Mme. Elizabeth's bedroom, and next to that the room of Tison and his wife. The western turret was a dressing-room, the eastern a store-place for logs, in the northern were the closets, and a small stairway leading to the fourth floor and the battlement. The fourth floor was merely a store-room containing odd bits of furniture and timber.

On the second and third floors, on folding beds placed outside the doors of the King's and the Queen's bedrooms, lay the two Commissioners on duty. The one on the second floor kept the key of a door by which Cléry could enter the corridor, and come into his master's room. His only approach to Louis by night was through the ante-room and across the bed of the Commissioner. So much for the internal arrangements for guarding the prisoners. The external arrangements were as carefully organised. In the high wall which surrounded the Tower, and isolated the prisoners, there were two doors, each kept by a porter. The keys of both porters were needed to open either door. There were also two small guard-rooms in the wall. In the Palace of the Grand Prior there



was a garrison of not less than two hundred of the National Guard, with cannon, their primary duty being the protection of the Temple from any assault by the mob. There were also two inspectors, charged with the general surveillance of all those who were constantly coming and going—tradesmen, workmen, officials, relatives and friends of officials—and numerous concierges and minor officials. To escape from the Tower it would have been necessary to evade or win over the Commissioners, to pass through the ground-floor room allotted to the Council, go through one of the doors in the high wall, cross the garden, emerge into the forecourt and leave either by the main gate or by a side gate.

In spite of the evidences of the close guard that was henceforth to be kept upon them, the family had the consolation of being united again, and the Dauphin was able to share in the joy of his parents, both of whom needed his constant company. His childish talk and his games took their minds momentarily from the crisis which they were facing. But one of the Commissioners had noticed this, and drew the attention of his comrades to it. The result was an order, approved next day by the Council of the Commune, to remove the Dauphin from his mother (from the influence of women, as they put it), seeing that he was now of an age to be among men. On the 26th, the day after the transfer from the Little Tower, he was taken from his mother. He was to be allowed to visit her, with a Commissioner in attendance. Cléry was to continue to look after the boy, who would sleep in his father's room. There were tears and protests, but they were of no avail.

The order of the day was not greatly changed from what it had been hitherto, but the supervision was closer and more irritating. The Dauphin—Cléry has left it on record—knew very well that his parents were in perpetual dread of the future. But either through the normal high spirits of youth (his health being evidently still good), or because he wished to distract his parents, the boy talked and laughed and played as though he did not realise the conditions of this captivity. He slept on a folding bed placed at the foot of his father's, and did not always wake when Cléry, accompanied by the Commissioner on duty, came in to rouse the King, at about seven o'clock. While Cléry lighted a fire of logs in the grate, Louis shaved himself. As soon as he was dressed, and had retired into the small turret-room to say his prayers or read his breviary, Cléry awoke the boy, and dressed him. Then, at about nine o'clock, father and son, accompanied by the Commissioner, went up to the third floor for breakfast with the rest of the family. There they found the remaining Commissioners, who had come from the kitchens with Turgu, Marchand and Chrétien, and now watched the table being laid. There was chocolate, coffee, cream, milk, bread, fruit, butter, lemonade. The King took his meal standing, and the Commissioners watched. Tison and his wife, the spies, also watched. When Louis and the Dauphin returned to the second floor, the Commissioner went with them, and the boy was put through his lessons, either by his father or by Cléry. After which, still under observation, the Dauphin played in the ante-room, while the King read his Buffon or his Tasso, or Hume's 'History of England,' or the 'Imitation.' The

principal meal of the day, at two o'clock, was served in the King's dining-room on the second floor, and was sufficiently sumptuous. There was a variety of soups and meats, dessert, pastry, and, for the King, champagne, red wine, and Madeira. The Queen drank her favourite water from Ville d'Avray. The Commissioners, as ever, were present, and remained covered. There followed more games for the children, a walk in the garden, and more lessons; the evening meal, then bed. But throughout the waking hours there was no escape from the vigilance of the guards. While the King read, or the Queen sewed, while Mme. Elizabeth read her breviary or some other book of devotions, and the girl played with her brother, always the guards were at hand, often in the very room. And Tison and his wife were in permanent residence. Great importance, therefore, was attached by the prisoners to the personnel of the Council. For the Commissioners differed a great deal. Some were simple shopkeepers, overawed at finding themselves so close to royalty, and quickly charmed by the simplicity of the King and the dignity and beauty of the Queen, and still more by the winning ways of the Dauphin. Others were men with a grievance, or those whose brains were too weak to digest the new philosophy. To them their period of duty was merely a chance to mock the prisoners, and to gloat over their misfortunes. Now and then would come a man who, moved in spite of himself, forced himself to an insolent bearing in order to curry favour with his comrades, and stand well with the Commune. Or again, there would arrive one who was not afraid to show respect and sympathy; an educated man, like that one

of whom the Dauphin said to his father, 'That man is reading Tacitus.' Each day the prisoners scrutinised the faces of the Commissioners, and questioned them about their families or their homes, and according to the reception with which their advances were met, the day would be bearable or almost unbearable. For it stands to reason that those who were disposed to be friendly relaxed the rigour of their control, and allowed their charges moments for private conversation, and a certain degree of liberty of movement. In time, as turns for duty came round again, they would recognise a face with dread; or the Dauphin would run to his father, crying, 'It's so-and-so again!'—and they could look forward to a comparatively pleasant day.

The Dauphin and his sister now played their parts in that system of communication with the outside world which had been brought to perfection. Turgy made use of his language of signs to pass on news which he had collected at the house of a royalist lady, and Cléry, who could only meet his wife in the Council Chamber, used a set of phrases which served as a channel of communication with people outside the Temple. Nearly every day notes were passed, Mme. Elizabeth being particularly active. The apparently spontaneous tumblings and sudden shouts of the Dauphin and his sister distracted the attention of the guards at the critical moment; or perhaps Louis or the Queen would engage one of the Commissioners in conversation. So, under the very eyes of the warders, questions were asked and answers returned, and notes were exchanged. Turgy experienced no difficulty in coming and going as he pleased two or three times a

week, since he always had the excuse of buying provisions, but in the Temple itself he was watched closely, for the very reason that he was in communication with the outside world. But he kept up this game until September 1793. Apart from these subterfuges, Cléry managed to arrange, through his wife and a friend, for a man to approach the Temple in the silence of the night and cry the news.

There was little enough in the news to sustain the strength of the prisoners. In the Convention the middle-class fanatics of the Gironde, a mere debating team, without leadership and without a plan, failed to achieve anything by their attack on the Mountain. Some of them really wanted to save the King's life, but feared the charge of being moderates. But the Mountain knew its own mind, and feared nothing, and was becoming more and more a symbol in the public mind of the Revolution in action; the Will of the people, speaking with the voice of authority. Clearly royalty must place its hopes in the return of the invaders. But there again the news was bad. Dumouriez was in Belgium, marching on Mons. The first of the great victories was to come on November 6—Jemappes. Little more than a week later Austrians and *émigrés* fled pell-mell from Brussels. In less than a month Belgium was overrun and conquered, and the war which the Girondins had urged grew too big for them.

On the Feast of All Saints, at ten o'clock in the morning, there arrived for the first time a deputation from the Convention, to interview the prisoners and to make a tour of inspection. They were three in number, and Santerre accompanied them. The royal family paid no particular

attention to Chabot and Duprat. But the face of the third recalled to them with a sharp sorrow a night which now seemed to belong to some previous life, so far had they travelled along the road of ignominy. It was the vigorous face of Drouet, and they had last seen it, only a year and a half ago, in the light of torches, outside the inn of the Bras d'Or. The voice they now heard again was the voice which had sworn and cursed, and finally bullied the undecided Sauce into refusing to allow the berlin to proceed. Drouet stood for the beginning of all their sufferings.

The family were together on the second floor when he came in, followed by his companions and the Commissioners. He sat down beside the Queen, who made a movement of disgust, of which he took no notice. He asked Louis if he had any complaints to make, and received the reply that all the King asked was to remain with his family. Later, however, the King had to ask for a sum of money for current expenses—notably to purchase linen and clothes. The deputation made a thorough inspection of all the rooms and of the kitchens, and asked questions about the food. In the afternoon they paid another visit to the prisoners, and Drouet appeared to have lost his bold manner. He spoke to Marie-Antoinette, asking her if she had anything to complain of. Though he repeated his question, she ignored it, and he was forced to retire without an answer. This visit disturbed the Queen considerably.

It was during this month of November that the question of the fate of Louis XVI came to a head, and gradually

absorbed the attention of the deputies. Many of the Girondins thought that the killing of the King would be a serious political error, but their thirst for popularity prevented them from running the risk of being branded as counter-revolutionaries. They refused to compromise themselves. There was no Barnave among them. As for those of the Mountain who, like Danton, would have willingly deferred the discussion, they were driven by the Jacobins, and by the extremists in their midst. In the middle of October a deputation from the Jacobins had demanded a sentence of death against the prisoners, and from that moment they redoubled their efforts. Barbaroux supported the demand in less bloodthirsty language. Manuel tried to play for time, but the committee of the Commune were given orders to prepare their report on the case, and on November 6 the Girondin Valazé read the document, which accused Louis of treason and conspiracy against the people. There remained a question which troubled many consciences—that of the inviolability of the monarch. But Danton pointed out that the people also are inviolable; but there are two parties to a contract; and that if the King is found guilty of conspiracy against the inviolable people, he is no longer himself inviolable.

That same evening the Austrians, flying in rout from the line of villages along the Haine, heard the war-song of the Republic which announced the victory of Jemappes. That same evening also, a Tuesday, the royal family heard a tumult outside the Temple, and distinguished their own names. The people had heard of the report, and it was now certain that Louis would be tried.

Next day Mailhe presented another report, the basis of which was that the person of the King was not inviolable, and that he must forthwith be tried by a tribunal chosen by the Convention, acting for the people. Mailhe then touched on the question of the Dauphin. He said: 'He has not yet had time to take part in the crimes of the Bourbons.' At the conclusion of the reading it was decided that three Commissioners be chosen from among the deputies to prepare a detailed indictment for presentation to the Convention, and a day, a week ahead, was fixed for a preliminary debate on the procedure to be adopted. On November 8 one of the guards saw the Queen, as she walked in the garden, nod her head to Mme. Cléry and her friend. The two were arrested and questioned at great length.

About this time Louis caught a cold and suffered a good deal from an inflamed gum. He asked for his dentist to be summoned, but the request was refused, fever set in, and the King's doctor Lemounier was allowed to come to him. The Commissioners would not permit the Dauphin to be transferred to his mother's room, and he too fell ill—and in turn the other prisoners. Cléry was confined to his bed, and Louis himself looked after the Dauphin. At stated times his anxious mother was allowed to visit him. One night, when Cléry was convalescent and had resumed his duties, Mme. Elizabeth managed to press into the Dauphin's hand a little box of pastilles, with instructions that Cléry was to have them. The boy was in bed at the time, but he remained awake until eleven o'clock when the valet came to prepare the King's bed. Cléry was surprised to hear the boy calling his name in a low



voice, and moved to tears to hear him say, 'I did not want to fall asleep until I had given you this little box from my aunt. High time you came, for I've almost dozed off several times.'

To this period belongs a description of the Dauphin as he appeared to the valet during these days; a gay and lovable child who, nevertheless, was under no illusion as to the gravity of the situation, and did everything in his power to console his parents. There is a story told of his sensibility. A workman engaged on the door of the King's ante-chamber, for which he was making new bolts, had gone away, leaving his tools. The Dauphin picked up the tools, and the King showed him how to use them. They were hammering and chiselling when the workman returned, and said good-naturedly, 'When you leave this tower, you will be able to say that you worked on your own prison.' 'When shall I ever leave it, and how?' replied Louis. The Dauphin began to cry, and Louis dropped the tools and retired to his room, where he paced up and down in great agitation.

Such news as could be smuggled in was increasingly bad. On November 15 a deputy, Morisson, had had the courage to put into words the thought of Pétion and a number of Girondins. He held the person of the King inviolable, and he said that England had become a monarchy again after killing Charles I. Not only had they no right to try the King, but it was a short-sighted policy. He proposed a decree of banishment in perpetuity from the soil of France. He was followed by a youngster of twenty-three, notorious in his village of Blérancourt for various unsavoury escapades, and as the author of a

licentious satire in verse, but so unknown in Paris, where he had but lately appeared, that a newspaper reported his name as Sinjeu. It was Saint-Just, and he said that the sovereign people had every right to judge Louis; in fact, that it was the duty of its representatives to condemn him to death. Of the speeches of that day and the next some were contemptuous and abusive, some reasonable and well-argued, and it was clear that many of the deputies could not accustom themselves to the idea of the death penalty for a King of France. But it was also clear that those who were not afraid to say, as Danton had said, 'We are not trying him; we are killing him,' were going to have their way. Among the voices heard calling for the trial was that of the Englishman Thomas Payne. As the month wore on, the speeches became more violent, and the question of whether or not the King was to be brought to trial was forgotten. The extremists, one after the other, were already pronouncing sentence. Saint-André expressed reasonably and tersely a fact which could not be denied. 'Louis was condemned on August 10. To call that condemnation into question would be to put the Revolution on trial; it would be to declare yourselves rebels.' And gradually, especially after a long speech of Robespierre, the Jacobin idea of dispensing with the formalities of a trial began to take shape. There, however, the majority had its way, and a long discussion followed on the procedure to be adopted.

In the Tower the family lost hope. On December 2 a newly elected municipality met for the first time, and the surveillance of the prisoners became more active. Cléry now had no news that could have cheered them, even had

it not been by now almost impossible to evade the watchfulness of the guards. Penknives and all sharp instruments were removed by order of the Commune, the service of the meals was more closely supervised, and the attitude even of the kindest Commissioners towards the prisoners became more surly, through fear. And there came a day when Mme. Cléry, visiting her husband in the Council Chamber, told him in an undertone that the King was to appear at the bar of the Convention within a few days. Cléry passed on the news to Louis that night. Since the scissors and other contents of their work-baskets had been taken from the Queen and Mme. Elizabeth, they were unable to shorten the hours as they had been accustomed, nor were they inclined to join the games of the Dauphin, who knew now that something was about to occur which was far more serious than anything that had happened hitherto. By night the two Commissioners on duty slept in the anteroom, instead of only one of them.

On Tuesday, December 11, the boy was awakened by a noise of drums beating, horse-hoofs in the court of the Temple, and the rumbling of gun-wheels. The family breakfasted together as usual, but in silence. The Commissioners, suspicious of the slightest movement or facial expression, stood close at hand. After the melancholy meal the boy went down to his father's room, and it was at eleven o'clock, in the middle of a reading lesson—the last his father was to give him—that two Commissioners entered, and announced that they came, by order of the Commune, to take the boy to his mother. Louis asked for an explanation, but the men merely repeated that they

had their orders, and Louis-Charles, mystified and unhappy, was taken to the Queen. Cléry accompanied him and returned to report that all was well upstairs. But the King was greatly distressed, and it was some time before he could compose himself to meet those who had come to escort him to the Convention. It was one o'clock when Chaumette and the other officials read out the decree summoning Louis Capet to appear before the Convention. 'Capet is not my name,' said the King. 'It was the surname of one of my ancestors. I could have wished, also, gentlemen, that the Commissioners had left my son with me while I awaited you. But, for that matter, this treatment is of the kind I have been accustomed to here for the past four months. I will follow you, gentlemen, not in obedience to the Convention, but because my enemies can employ force.' And with that he took his hat and cloak from Cléry and walked to the carriage which was to bear him to the first day of his trial.

While Louis was replying calmly and with great dignity to the questions of Barère at the Convention, his family tried to obtain news of him. Marie-Antoinette put aside her pride, and questioned the Commissioners, without obtaining any information. It was Cléry who discovered, by questioning an official whose sympathy had been awakened by the sight of so much suffering, that the Commune had demanded the separation of Louis from his family during the trial, but that the Convention had not yet pronounced on the matter. They knew, however, by now that the Commune, driven by the Jacobins, would get its way in anything it wanted. Mme. Elizabeth realised that there was no hope for the King's life. At two o'clock,

as usual, dinner was served in the King's dining-room, but there was little conversation, and the Dauphin, stupefied by the grief on his mother's face, remained silent. The approaching separation was but a shadow of the bereavement to come.

Louis himself knew that he must die, after that first day's examination, but there were immediate tribulations which called for all his self-control and nobility of mind. He returned to the Temple at 6.30 on that night of December 11, and at once asked to be taken to his family. The Commissioners said they had no orders. At 8.30 his supper was served. He waited for his family to come down to his room, saying that surely they were to sup with him. Again the Commissioners pleaded lack of orders. 'At least,' said the King, 'my son will sleep in my room. His bed and his personal belongings are here.' There was no reply. When he had eaten he again asked to be allowed to see his family. They said that he must await the decision of the Convention. On the floor above the Queen was making the same demands, but with as little success. Cléry prepared the Dauphin's bed in the King's room, but the boy did not come. The Queen, when he grew sleepy, had undressed him and laid him in her own bed. All night, seated in a chair, she watched beside him. Next day both the King and the Queen again asked to be allowed to meet. The Queen also demanded newspapers, that she might read of the trial, and requested that if she were not to be allowed to see the King, at any rate her children should be taken to their father. But three days passed while these requests were being put before the General Council of the Commune, and the

Convention. During those days a means of communication was established. Cléry was not allowed to see the three Princesses or the Dauphin, but he contrived to send up the clothing of the Dauphin piece by piece, and so smuggled news through. Furthermore, Mme. Elizabeth had given him a handkerchief. If the King fell ill the handkerchief was to be returned to her, folded in a certain formation according to the gravity of the illness.

Meanwhile the King was allowed to interview his counsel every day. On December 15 the reply of the Convention to the three requests arrived. Newspapers were refused, nor were the King and Queen to meet, but the children might visit their father, on condition that they remained with him, and were allowed no further communication with their mother or their aunt so long as the trial lasted. It was the most difficult decision Louis had ever been called upon to make. He did not hesitate. To spare Marie-Antoinette the pain of being parted from her children he determined to endure his own hunger for a sight of them, and to face alone whatever was ahead of him. Through the December days he worked with his three counsel almost daily, preparing a defence which he knew to be useless for any practical purpose. But for the Dauphin and the others the time passed slowly. There were no more walks in the garden, and even the children had little heart for games or for reading stories. The resourceful Cléry had contrived to collect a quantity of string which was used for tying up parcels of candles. By means of this string he arranged for an exchange of notes between the King and Mme. Elizabeth. The note was lowered from the Queen's window, and then the

string was hauled up again with a note from the King attached. In addition to this, there was no rigid adherence to the decree of the Commune with regard to the Commissioners. Those who were at all sympathetic consented to bring harmless news of the King to his family, and from them to him. But these were small enough consolations, and nobody any longer doubted the outcome of the trial.

On Christmas Day Louis made his will, writing out two copies of it in his own hand. It included certain directions for the Dauphin, in the event of his 'having the misfortune to become King,' and exhorted him to keep in mind those who had remained faithful to the Monarchy, as well as those who, led astray by the times, had proved unfaithful. On St. Stephen's Day, there were again the sounds of troops and of drums beating in the early morning, and Louis went to the Convention, where his defence was read by Desèze, and he himself followed it by a short speech—'Perhaps the last I shall make before you.' All through that day he was again serene, and majestic in his dignity. He was brought back in the evening to the Temple, and once more divided his days between prayer, reading and conversation with Desèze, de Malesherbes and Tronchet, the three counsel.

Early in the new year there was noted in Paris a certain manifestation of opinion favourable to the King, a matter of certain lines in a play or two, applauded in the theatres. It was without much real significance, but it deceived a few simple people, and brought Mme. Cléry to the Temple in a great state of excitement. What was more significant was that the General Council of the Commune were





finding difficulty in supplying Commissioners. Sometimes those whose turn it was had to be taken to the Temple under police guard, and on January 15 it was decided to fine those who failed to carry out their duties. At first there had been keen competition for the post of Commissioner, but a close view of the prisoners had latterly shocked all but the most brutal. There is a typical instance of this change in the story of the man Ragoneau. He had come to the Temple for his first term of duty a convinced Republican, and ready to loathe the King. On January 7 this man found himself alone for a moment with Louis. He excused himself for the task he had to carry out, and begged the King for a memento. He was given a pair of gloves, 'Which I would not part with for all the treasures of the earth.'

Above the King's room the three women and the boy waited. There was no event in their day but the scanty news of Louis. The clumsy attempts made by the guards to convey that all might yet be well were appreciated, but no trust was placed in their vague cheerfulness. Mme. Royale had fallen ill, and was attended by a doctor, and the Dauphin now had to rely on himself to pass his days. But the suspense was nearly over. Salle, the Girondin, speaking for those who still hesitated, suggested an appeal to the people, and there was a storm of protest. Some, like Barère, said it would mean civil war, resulting from a Girondin appeal to the provinces against Paris. Others, like Saint-Just, knew that the people would carry the day. 'It means recalling the Monarchy,' he said. Robespierre uttered a sentence typical of him. 'Virtue,' said he, 'has always been with a minority in the affairs of

this world.' The Commune, the clubs and the Mountain redoubled their efforts. On January 15 Louis was pronounced guilty, by a unanimous vote. The appeal to the people was defeated by 424 against 283. On the 16th Louis said to Malesherbes: 'Tell M. de Firmont to be ready. The moment is coming.' That evening at eight o'clock began the voting by roll-call, to decide the penalty to be imposed. It continued for twenty-four hours, day and night. After fourteen hours the result was certain. The waverers were giving in, and at eight o'clock on the evening of the 17th Vergniaud announced the result—'I declare in the name of the Convention that the death penalty is hereby pronounced upon Louis Capet.'

That evening Malesherbes found Louis sitting by lamp-light in his room, his elbows on the table, and his head in his hands, waiting for the news. He received it without a tremor. The request for a respite of three days in which to prepare for death was refused, but only by a majority of seventy. The King was to be allowed to see his family in private, without witnesses, and the Abbé Edgeworth was to attend him.

During the next two days the King's fortitude increased. He was troubled only by the thought of what might become of his family, and when Malesherbes was refused admittance to the prison he made no protest, but sat reading a description of the execution of Charles I. The story of the last two days of his life has been told a thousand times in detail; the visit of the Executive Council, and the reading of the death sentence in the early afternoon of Sunday, January 20; the refusal of respite; the visit of the Abbé Edgeworth. In this book we are concerned

with the Dauphin, and so with the final scene of that Sunday evening when the King took leave of his family.

The darkness of the winter night had closed about the Temple when the three women and the boy heard a voice calling news in the street, and knew that Louis was to die. It is possible to argue that a boy of seven years and ten months understands nothing of death, or thinks of it as a parting for an indefinite time. It is also possible, by emphasising the Dauphin's youth, to exaggerate that lack of understanding. Let my reader look back and try to remember himself at the age of eight. Let him recall a bereavement, the loss of a father or mother, and I think he will find that the simplicity of death as a going away beyond recall was understood, and that his young grief was no less sharp for being but vaguely apprehended. Over this boy, the Dauphin, a threat had hovered continually for years. We know from Cléry that he realised the hostility which surrounded the prison. As long as he could remember he had been involved in scenes of violence, and had heard men and women demanding the heads of his parents. He had watched for five months, in the prison, the sufferings of his father, his mother and his aunt; and his sister, who was one month over her fourteenth birthday, must have told him her fears or betrayed them in moments of anxiety. There can have been no doubt in his mind that some culmination of all that had happened was at hand, when on this Sunday evening, at eight o'clock, one of the Commissioners brought word that the family had permission to go down to the second storey to see the King. His mother took him by the hand, and led him down the stone stairs.

When he came into the King's dining-room, which had been chosen for the last meeting (because it had a glass door, and they could be watched), he may have noticed, as his sister did, how changed his father was since he had seen him nearly six weeks before. His mother suggested that they should go into some more private room, but the King told her that it would not be allowed. When the shock of the reunion was over, Louis sat down, and stood the boy between his knees. He then told them that he was to die the next day, gave them some details of his trial, excused those who had condemned him. Then he addressed himself more particularly to his son, speaking to him of the Catholic religion, and making him promise to pardon the men who had contrived his father's death. To impress upon him the full solemnity of such a promise, and to give it the ritual of an oath, he raised the boy's right hand as he spoke. When Louis rose from his chair, to end his own agony and theirs, the Queen, weeping bitterly, asked if they might not remain together, all of them, through this last night. But he, having need to prepare himself for death, and knowing that the sight of their pain might weaken him, refused. But he promised her that he would see them all again in the morning, at eight o'clock. The Queen, knowing that he might have been taken away by then, said, 'Why not at seven o'clock?' 'At seven o'clock, then,' said Louis, having made up his mind to break the promise, since such a farewell would have been unendurable for both of them. They had been with him nearly two hours when they clung to him for the last time, forcing him to loosen their arms from him. He returned to the room where the Abbé

awaited him, and his family went blindly up the stairs again, Cléry and Mme. Elizabeth carrying Mme. Royale, who had fainted. Marie-Antoinette undressed the sleepy boy and put him to bed. She herself lay down fully clothed, waiting for the dawn. Outside a cold rain fell, melting the new-fallen snow in the streets, and they heard her groaning aloud as she tossed on her bed. Then came the far-off roll of a drum, answered presently by another and another, as the sections were summoned to their posts. Then the sound of a bugle, and the hum of crowds coming into the streets in the neighbourhood of the Temple. Dawn came slowly, and night seemed to linger, for there was a thick mist, ice-cold. But long before the appointed time the four of them sat in the Queen's room listening for a step on the stair, and the summons for that last meeting upon which their hearts were fixed. The noises increased. Troops entered the great forecourt. Commands were shouted. The Dauphin, cold, weary and terrified, had buried his head against his mother, and was crying, when the door opened, and a Commissioner entered. But instead of bidding the family descend, he asked for a book of prayers which the King needed for his Mass. Before he could retire the Dauphin tried to dash past him, but he stopped him and asked him where he was going. 'I'm going to speak to the people,' he said; 'I'm going to beg them not to have my father killed.'

They expected to be summoned at any moment now, but nobody came. Seven, eight o'clock passed. Doors were opened and shut below. Cavalry rode into the forecourt. They watched the door, until many steps sounded on the stairs below—but the steps were going down the

stairs. There was a stir and bustle outside, and they could no longer have been in doubt that the prisoner had started on his last journey. The Queen tried to make the children take some food, but they refused, remaining by her side, pressing close to her in the silence which had now fallen upon the Temple. At about twenty minutes past ten that silence was broken by cheering in the distance, and by the firing of guns. Close at hand the drums of the Temple garrison beat. Mme. Elizabeth uttered a cry, but the Queen sat motionless, and said no word until the Dauphin threw himself into her arms and tried to comfort her.

Certain writers have said that during these moments of sorrow the Queen, followed by her sister-in-law and her daughter, saluted her son as Louis XVII, King of France, and made her act of submission to him. M. Léon Creissels<sup>1</sup> describes this scene of 'simple grandeur' which took place 'in the dining-room of the second storey' (they were in their own quarters on the third storey at the time) in the presence of 'the faithful Cléry' (Cléry was in his own room on the floor below when the guns were fired to announce the death of Louis XVI). The evidence for this informal ceremony is a phrase used by Turgy the waiter twenty-four years later. In 1817, when Bruneau, one of the many pretenders, was in prison at Rouen, Turgy was allowed to question him. To test him he asked, 'What happened on January 21, when we heard the guns being fired? What unusual thing was done with regard to you?' Turgy's own account of

<sup>1</sup> *Louis XVII et les Faux Dauphins* (Albin Michel, 1936).

January 21, published in 1818, does not mention any unusual occurrence. Mme. Royale says nothing of it. Nor do Beauchesne or Chantelauze. It is not impossible that the Queen may have called her little son King on that morning, but there is no sufficient evidence that she did. In a legal sense, according to constitutional law, he was never King, but he was accepted as such by many thousands of Frenchmen in France, by the *émigrés*, and by many foreign countries.

## CHAPTER IV

### PLANS FOR ESCAPE ; LOUIS-CHARLES SEPARATED FROM HIS MOTHER

THE head of a King, as Danton said, had been hurled at the feet of the Kings in coalition. The Kings took up the challenge, and the Republic, after its first easy victories, found itself at bay. Throughout the ensuing months, which are filled with the last desperate struggle of the ideologues against the men of action, the fate of the prisoners in the Temple depends upon the fortunes of the war. At first they are treated more kindly than before, and then, when the retreat begins, when the defeat at Neerwinden and the treason of Dumouriez have tarnished the glory of Jemappes, they feel the effects of the anger of the Mountain. Louis-Charles has become of the first importance as a hostage. It is necessary to prevent an escape, because he is the acknowledged King of the enemies of France, and even of those thousands in the French provinces who are demanding the restoration of the Monarchy. It is also necessary to preserve his life, because, in the event of a triumphal return of Artois and Provence, he will be a card to bargain with. Chaumette and Hébert, by producing him, can boast that they saved the King's life for this happy occasion. Therefore, though for a while the family is less harassed and granted



rather more privacy than before, the precautions taken to make escape impossible are never relaxed. For there are those in the Convention who say that though Charles I was beheaded, his son came to the throne, and the consternation which had been the chief note of Paris after January 21 is remarked by the observant.

The loosely combined group which is called the party of the Gironde, but was never a party in any organised sense, carried its own doom within it. These men belonged to '91, and their strength was in debate, in nobility of sentiment, and grandeur of diction. It was they who forced the war, not understanding what they were taking in hand. They would have made greater efforts to save the King if they had not feared loss of power. But though their leaders voted for his death, Robespierre, who hated them, knew that ambition drove them, and Danton, who despised and pitied them, had measured them, and knew they were not of a stature to direct a country at war. Within six months of the death of Louis XVI the tide of invasion had swept the demoralised French troops back, the royalist standard was raised in Brittany, the Girondin refugees were stirring up civil war in Normandy, Lyons and Marseilles were in revolt. and the safety of Paris depended upon the resistance of a few fortresses. But by that time the Committee of Public Safety and the Revolutionary Tribunal had come into being, and the will and energy of one man, of Danton, were pitted against the invading armies. At that period of extreme peril the prisoners in the Temple became once more a symbol in the public mind for treachery. The Queen seemed a kind of advance guard of the invasion, an enemy within the

gates of Paris. As for the boy Louis-Charles, in the words of Hébert, 'For royalists and moderates the King never dies. He is in the Temple.'

On the afternoon of January 21 the Queen asked for Cléry, in order that he might describe to her the last hours of her husband and hand to her the personal effects of the dead king. These, however—the wedding ring, the gold signet and other articles which Louis had handed to Cléry—had been confiscated by the Commune. The Commune returned them to the Temple, where they were sealed in packages and placed in a locked cupboard in the Council Chamber. We shall hear more of them. The family remained together all through the long hours of the afternoon and evening, and when at last it was night, only Louis-Charles slept. Mme. Royale lay down, but remained awake. The Queen and Mme. Elizabeth sat by the boy's bed, talking in low voices. The Queen remarked that he was now as old as his brother who had died at Meudon, and that the dead of his race were the happiest, because they were spared the pain of this tragedy. But Tison and his wife, hearing the sound of voices—it was in the small hours of the morning—came with the guards to the door of the room. Mme. Elizabeth said, without anger, 'I beg of you, leave us in peace.' Louis-Charles slept on, and the two women continued their vigil.

During the days that followed the King's death Louis-Charles had to content himself with such games as he could play indoors. For Marie-Antoinette abandoned the daily walks in the garden, partly because she could not

bring herself to pass the door of the King's room on the way down the stairs, and partly because she feared to meet Santerre, or some other who had been present on January 21 in an official capacity. For some time Mme. Royale had suffered from a sore on her foot. It grew worse, and lack of exercise made her general health a matter of concern. The Commune refused to allow her old nurse to come and look after her, but one of the royal doctors, Brunier, was admitted, and the mere sight of a face that had been familiar in the old days was some consolation to them all. But Brunier was more than a consolation. He was a messenger from the outside world. He brought the prisoners news, and no doubt he carried messages for them to royalists in Paris. They had other friends.

At a session of the General Council of the Commune, a week after the King's death, the reluctance of the members to do duty as Commissioners led to a protest by certain of them who objected to acting as valets, as they put it, to Marie-Antoinette. They demanded her transfer to the Conciergerie. It was then that Réal made the speech in which he pointed out that their task was to guard the Dauphin rather than the Queen. He told them that this was the hostage they must keep, and warned them that if they attached no importance to this duty, they might be suspected of being indifferent to the boy's escape. But in spite of his warning it became so difficult to supply the prison with officials that instead of drawing lots or resorting to the old system of alphabetical order it became the custom for certain men to offer their services, which were readily accepted. It was a dangerous solution

to the problem, and it provided the prisoners with two friends who have become famous—Toulan and Lepitre. Toulan was a Gascon of thirty-two, full of energy, brave as a lion, resourceful, impudent. He was a native of Toulouse, of medium height, with a merry round face and a snub nose; a convinced revolutionary, but one who, from his first tour of duty in September '92, had borne himself respectfully, and after that had slowly become attached to the prisoners, until they came to rely upon him as one of their few friends inside the Temple. Lepitre was a contrast in every way to his companion. He was an ugly little pedant with a club foot; a native of Paris, twenty-nine years old, sometime professor of literature at Lisieux, and, until elected to the Commune of December '92, a schoolmaster in Paris. Though associated with Toulan's schemes, he played a double game with such skill that he lived through the Revolution, and died—still a schoolmaster—at Versailles in 1821. These two, the vivacious Gascon and the prematurely grave Parisian, were on guard together on January 26, three days after the prisoners had been supplied with mourning clothes. Lepitre had by this time discovered that Toulan's public parade of antagonism to the royal family and his republican talk were but the playing of a part. By winning the confidence of his colleagues at the Commune he was able to be useful to the prisoners without arousing suspicion. When the two of them arrived on January 26 Toulan took care that they should not be separated. It was at this time the custom for three Commissioners to arrive together, and to put into a hat three slips of paper. Two bore the word *nuit*, one the

word *jour*. He who drew the latter slept in the Council Chamber. But Toulan wrote *jour* on the three slips, and passed the hat to the third Commissioner, who, satisfied with his luck, retired to sleep below. By volunteering constantly, and by using this stratagem, Toulan and Lepitre could converse at leisure with the prisoners, after Tison and his wife were asleep.

The first thing Toulan did was to smash open the cupboard in the Council Chamber, and abstract the articles which the King had bidden Cléry deliver to the Queen. Toulan brought the ring and the signet to Marie-Antoinette. When the Council discovered the broken cupboard and knew that the articles were missing, they concluded that a thief had taken them, for there were workmen, tradesmen, messengers and friends of the officials coming and going constantly. Toulan himself heartily supported this theory. And meanwhile he was preparing another trick. On the pretext that it was necessary to make alterations in the mourning garments, which did not fit well, he succeeded in getting one of the Queen's dress-makers admitted to the Tower. This woman, Mlle. Pion, was at the moment in the service of Mme. de Tourzel, to whom she related afterwards the skill of the Dauphin in hoodwinking Tison or any hostile official. He would pretend to be playing a game and would come dancing up to her, to ask her under his breath all the questions to which answers were required.

But it must not be thought that the daily life of the prisoners was always as free from care as when the guards were friendly. There were still many who would not tolerate the slightest sign of respect or pity for the

prisoners. An ironmonger named Macé one day rebuked his colleagues for shouting vile abuse at the Queen. He was turned out of the General Council and denounced as a moderate. And in spite of the comparative ease with which she could now communicate with the outside world, she was unable to forget for long that she was the prisoner of the Commune and her son its hostage. She and Mme. Elizabeth continued the education of Louis-Charles in so far as they were able, and impressed upon him the commands of his father with regard to his religion. In order that he should not be entirely deprived of fresh air, which had always been so necessary to him, she would take him up to the top of the Tower, where there was a space along which they could walk, and from which he could look down on the streets of the quarter—until the Commune had the view blocked out by shutters fixed between the crenellations.

The idea of escape had begun to suggest itself. Outside, within a week of the death of Louis, royalists had begun to make plans, and inside, Toulan was no laggard. He came to the Queen with a project, in which she saw a possibility of success. She therefore authorised him to get into touch with a trusted royalist and a faithful friend of the late King—Jarjayes, who had followed the royal family to the Feuillants on August 10, and had received the King's order not to leave Paris. He was forty-eight years of age, and married to one of Marie-Antoinette's ladies, and it was he who had acted as intermediary in the secret correspondence between Barnave and the Queen from July 1791 to January 1792. Being a soldier, he would be the man to put Toulan's plan into action. But he had had no

warning of what was toward when one day he was visited by a man whose costume made him suspicious, and whose protestations of fidelity to the royal family made him certain that a trap was being laid for them. His doubts were only dispelled when Toulan produced a letter from the Queen bidding him have every confidence in the bearer, but to beware of Tison and his wife. Toulan then outlined his plan, and Jarjays, still a little cautious, replied that he must have an interview with Marie-Antoinette. Lepitre was taken into their confidence, and demanded one hundred thousand francs, since he had his position as a respected schoolmaster to consider. Jarjays paid him the money out of his own considerable fortune. Ricard, husband of a cousin of Lepitre, was brought in, and there were frequent discussions, in which Louis-Charles had a task to perform. He would go with his sister into a corner, so that he might not betray anything by look or word to Tison and his wife. According to Jarjays himself, he actually visited the Queen during the preparation of the escape, in disguise. But Tison and his wife were growing suspicious and were becoming more alert, and unfortunately the boy was unable to hide the fact that he loathed both of them and distrusted them.

Towards the end of February the escape had been fixed for the early days of March. The final details of the scheme were as follows. Marie-Antoinette and Mme. Elizabeth were to be disguised as Commissioners, Toulan and Lepitre having smuggled in long, thick overcoats and cockaded hats, and official cards which had to be shown to the porters of the main guard. Tison and his wife were to be given some Spanish snuff of which they were

particularly fond, with a narcotic mixed in it, to put them to sleep. At about 7.30, while the guard was being changed, Ricard, disguised as the lamplighter who came every evening after dark, and usually accompanied by his two sons, would arrive to enquire loudly of Toulan for his children. Toulan, having upbraided him for sending them to do his work, instead of coming himself, would hand over the Dauphin and Mme. Royale, dressed as boys, their clothes smeared with oil and their faces and hands stained and dirty. Discipline was lax, and a mere flourish of the official cards would satisfy the sentries. Once clear of the Temple they were to make for the neighbouring rue de la Corderie, where three carriages, in charge of Jarjays, would be waiting. The fugitives would post to Dieppe and embark for England in a boat which Amabert, a fellow-Grenoblois of Jarjays, had chartered.

Now a mere glance at this plan will suggest that its success depended upon a combination of lucky chances. The mere idea of attempting to escape was a bold one, but Toulan's scheme depended on that luck which often attends the maddest enterprises. First, there must be no bungling with Tison and his wife, whose suspicions were already awakened. Then, at any stage of the descent of the stairs, the passage through the Council room and the long walk to the main gates of the prison, they were liable to meet one of the guards or one of the garrison, and to be questioned, merely because they wore the uniform of Commissioners. Anybody might have jested with the children. They had to risk the scrutiny of the porters. And so on. Jarjays, more cautious than Toulan, had from the first realised the difficulties, and





had advised against a concerted attempt of the entire family. He believed that they could effect the escape of the Queen, but she, of course, refused to separate herself from the others.

The failure of the scheme was due to several causes, chief among them a sudden tightening-up of regulations at the Temple and a determination to leave nothing to chance. For neither the Convention nor the Commune was ignorant of the various projects for freeing the prisoners. The most daring plan was that of Dumouriez, who proposed to send a squadron or two of cavalry to break into the Temple and carry off the prisoners. But there was another reason for guarding the prisoners closely. In mid-February the French armies were forced to retreat, and as the month wore on the provincial towns, particularly Lyons, took arms against the Revolution. At the beginning of March Miranda was forced out of Liège, the Vendée was preparing to strike, the Austrians overran Belgium, and Paris was once more expecting the daily advance of the allies. Danton had come back from Belgium to find his wife dead, and had once more thrown all his tremendous energy into a campaign to save France from the dangerous incapacity of the Girondins. In the streets there was rioting over the scarcity of food, and grave disorder owing to the news of the rout of the French armies. And as the time fixed for the escape approached, things grew worse. Furthermore, Lepitre, who was to have procured passports, took fright and made difficulties. It is no excuse for him that the suspension of passports for foreign countries was decreed on March 10. He should have procured them long before. On March 8 the theatres

were closed, and the Sections assembled, and on the Town Hall appeared the huge flag which announced that the country was in danger. Above the towers of Notre-Dame, also, the black flag flew. Anger was rising against the Girondins, and after a quiet day on the 9th Danton, on the 10th, carried the first of those measures by which he designed to provide France with a strong central government of realists: the Revolutionary Tribunal was instituted. This was the day fixed for the escape, and Toulan and Lepitre were on guard together, as was necessary for the success of the scheme. But by now it had been abandoned, and Jarjayes once more tried to persuade Marie-Antoinette to make the attempt alone. She refused, later allowing him to perform one more service for her. It was he who took to the Comte de Provence the ring and the signet which Toulan had stolen from the Council Chamber, and also a letter signed by Mme. Royale and by Louis XVII. This is the only signature of the young King (as Louis XVII) known, and is the one which the impostor Naundorff copied fifty years later—adding, with characteristic clumsiness, the word Charles.

During the rest of the month of March, as the armies of the Coalition won success after success, and as civil war came nearer within the borders of France, the prisoners were so closely guarded that their communication with their friends outside became more difficult and far more dangerous. Tison and his wife were beginning to show their true colour, and it was Louis-Charles who was responsible for their first outburst. One day they were reprimanded by a Commissioner named Vincent. Knowing that the child detested them, they imagined that it

was he who had reported them to Vincent. They came into the Queen's room, and began to shout at Louis-Charles, calling him a spy. The dignified reply of Marie-Antoinette made them even angrier, and they never forgot the episode. In order to confirm their suspicions of what was going on, they kept a closer watch, and awaited the moment when they could take their revenge.

Danton's attempt to unite the country, and to save the Girondins from the consequences of their folly before it was too late, failed. He had been with the armies, and knew what threatened France. But the petty-mindedness of Manon Roland and the stubbornness and lack of statesmanship of Guadet and his companions frustrated all his efforts. The Girondins were doomed even before Dumouriez wrote his insolent letter to the Convention and fatally compromised them. Staking everything on a victory, he lost at Neerwinden on March 20. Abandoning his idea of a march on Paris to enthrone Louis XVII, he began to plot his desertion to the Austrians. Serving with them, he could still see his scheme carried out. Meanwhile the Breton squires preached a war for religion and the provinces a war against the Revolution. And Danton created his Committee of Public Safety. Less news reached the prisoners in the Temple, and the next attempt to liberate them was being discussed before they knew about it. For if they, inside the prison, had no means of making a picture in their minds of the march of events, their friends outside knew the peril that was increasing daily. Too much blood had been shed already for them to comfort themselves with the delusion that nothing would be attempted against the lives of the

prisoners. For though there were some who designed to keep them safe, and to produce them as something to bargain with in the event of the success of the invaders, there were others who feared that their rivals might kidnap the family, or at any rate the boy, to prevent his rescue by royalists; and yet others who did not hesitate to press for the extermination of the prisoners.

On April 19 Tison and his wife framed their denunciation and took it to the Commune. It charged five Commissioners—notably Toulan, Lepitre and the unfortunate Vincent—with having been corrupted by the prisoners; with having brought them news from outside, and given them pens, paper and other materials, to enable them to carry on a correspondence with their friends; also with having held conferences in secret with the Queen and her sister-in-law. Mme. Tison exhibited a candlestick, on the sconce of which was a smudge of sealing-wax. It was from Mme. Elizabeth's room, and was shown as proof that she had written letters and sealed them. How much the couple knew and how much was mere instinct is beside the point. Their accusations were correct—even the last, for that very morning, according to Turgy himself, Mme. Elizabeth had given him a sealed letter for the Abbé Edgeworth. There was a perfect case for sending at any rate Toulan and Lepitre before the Revolutionary Tribunal, but this was not done, partly because Tison was held in no very great esteem, and partly because it was important not to have a scandal. The two Commissioners remained members of the Commune, so that nobody could say that there were traitors at the Town Hall. But as some atten-

tion had to be paid to Tison, who had fallen into a rage because his daughter had been refused admittance to the Temple, a simple plan was found which would please Tison, and show that the Commune was carrying out its responsibilities in a correct manner. It was decided that the royal family must be further humiliated and oppressed.

On April 20, at about half-past ten at night, Hébert came into the Tower with four officials, probably hoping to take the prisoners off their guard, and surprise some plot or other. He was armed with a decree of the General Council authorising him and his men to search the rooms and the prisoners themselves. They searched for more than four hours. Louis-Charles was awakened from his sleep, and lifted out of his bed. Still only half-awake, he clung to his mother in terror, while the officials looked beneath his mattress, shook out his pillow, and routed in every corner of the room. They took away with them a note-book bound in red morocco leather, in which the Queen had written a number of addresses (such as that of Brunier), an empty pencil-case, and a prayer for France which the Queen had written out, and part of which they quoted in their report. In Mme. Elizabeth's room they found a piece of sealing-wax, which also they confiscated. Two days later they returned, and their second report exculpated the Commissioners denounced by Tison. But in a box beneath Mme. Elizabeth's bed they found an old hat, which she told them had belonged to the King. The story goes that Toulan had substituted his own for the King's, some days before January 21, and so had been able to preserve the relic until he could hand it to Louis XVI's sister. Hébert inclined to the view that

the hat had been smuggled in as a disguise in view of an attempt to escape. Shortly after this Tison's wife was seized with remorse. The denunciation, which she had possibly signed only at her husband's command, and its sequel, preyed upon her mind. She lay awake at night, muttering and groaning. She knelt before the Queen and Mme. Elizabeth, saying that she had betrayed them, and imploring their pardon. The memories of her life as a spy haunted her. When she grew worse, and finally became insane, she was taken away and put into a mad-house. The kindness of the prisoners towards her at the beginning of her illness and their lack of resentment against her made such an impression on Tison that he changed his ways, and became suspect, and was shut up in the Tower as a prisoner.

But there was an illness that touched the family more nearly. The health of Louis-Charles was breaking. Lack of fresh air and exercise had begun to tell upon him, and he was complaining of a pain in his side, which hurt him when he laughed, and made his breathing difficult when he lay down. His head ached, and at night he became feverish. His mother reported the illness, and demanded a doctor urgently—Brunier, who knew the boy well. The Commune hesitated. The request for a doctor, coming so soon after the visit of Hébert and the precautions taken to prevent communication with the outside world, made them suspicious. Also, a mother would obviously exaggerate the gravity of the illness. And, thirdly, the name Brunier delayed their decision. He had been involved in the suspicions which Tison's denunciation had awakened. It must not be Brunier. Finally,

after a delay during which the boy grew worse, the Commune decided to appoint the prison doctor, Thierry, to take charge of the case. Thierry, though a member of the Commune, had strong royalist sympathies. He took news of the prisoners to Mme. de Tourzel, and called on Brunier for advice in treating the sick boy. The illness, complicated by convulsions, lasted through the month of May, and the Queen and her sister-in-law nursed Louis-Charles devotedly, remaining with him day and night. The fever was succeeded by an ailment of the stomach, and by an attack of worms. But by the end of May he was better, and his mother had asked for and obtained *Gil Blas* for him.

During his illness the long resistance of the Girondins to the doom which there was no avoiding drew to its close. In the Paris of martial law, of a single vigorous and ruthless executive acting by the will of Danton, there was no place for the dreamers. The royalist manifesto drawn up at Fontenay-le-Comte, in which the western leaders claimed to speak for France in their demand for the re-establishment of the Catholic religion and the restoration of the monarchy, infuriated public opinion against whatever was even 'moderate.' There was common talk of counter-revolutionary conspiracies in Paris. The invading armies were drawing nearer. Robespierre's proposal—made in April—that Marie-Antoinette should be brought to trial—was taken up and discussed more seriously, and measures were demanded to ensure that 'the son of Louis Capet should not succeed his father.' On the last day of May the prisoners were



forbidden to go up to the Tower for their breath of air, and they heard the tocsin, the drums beating, and all the noises of the massing of the mob with which they had now become familiar. They asked what was toward, but nobody would tell them. They did not know that the Mountain had won its victory, and that from that moment Danton and his Committee would rule France, and that the Revolution was now marching along a road which led to the little villages and obscure valleys one day to be the most famous battlefields of Europe.

In Paris, throughout the early summer, an adventurer, a sixty-two-year-old coffee-house keeper, and a grocer were working on the most daring of all the plans made for the escape of the prisoners. The adventurer was the Baron Jean-Pierre de Batz, now thirty-nine years of age, a speculator, with friends and enemies in every class of society and, after 1789, in every party. He is supposed to have organised a scheme for rescuing Louis XVI on his way to the guillotine, by concealing royalists in the cellars of houses along the route, and rushing the carriage as it climbed the slope from the Porte Sainte-Denis. He claimed descent from d'Artagnan, and whatever lies he told, he certainly possessed great courage. The old coffee-house keeper was Michonis, who with advancing age had been transformed from a ferocious republican into a mild royalist, probably from motives of self-interest. He had been a member of the Commune since August 10, '92, but had made no great name for himself. Cortey, the grocer, was thirty-six, a Captain in the National Guard, and quite unknown outside his own circle of friends.

These three men had been perfecting the details of their scheme slowly and carefully. There was no lack of money, thanks to the Baron's connexions with various bankers and their agents in England and Holland and elsewhere. Batz had bought certain members of the Convention and of the Commune. Through Michonis, and through agents of his own, he had a hold on the police. Through Cortey, who commanded the armed force of the Lepelletier Section, he had won over a body of soldiers, and a certain Chrétien, member of the jury of the Revolutionary Tribunal, an influential man in the same Section. The conspirators met in Cortey's shop in the rue Richelieu, and by the beginning of June they had examined their plan over and over again, to detect any flaw in it. It was audacious in the extreme, but it had a good chance of success, and Michonis, when his turn of duty arrived, began to prepare the prisoners for the attempt. The first necessity was that Cortey and Michonis should be on duty together, Michonis inside the Tower, Cortey in charge of the patrol of thirty men from which guards were supplied for the staircase and for the various gates. Cortey would arrive with the thirty men who had been won over, among them Batz, under the name of Forget. These men would take up their various posts, one on each of the three landings, the rest outside the Tower. Michonis, having got rid of his fellow Commissioner, would mount guard over the prisoners. Between midnight and two o'clock, at an agreed signal, the two women and the girl were to dress themselves in clothes smuggled in by the patrol, and come down the stairs with the three guards. Once outside they were to mix with

the rest of the patrol. Each would carry a rifle and wear a military hat. Batz himself would throw his cloak over the boy, and keep him close at his side, in the centre of the troop. It would be loudly announced that they were going to make an inspection of the neighbouring streets, as was customary. Round a corner from the main entrance Hyde de Neuville would be waiting with carriages.

Early in June, before the time had come to put the plan of escape into action, there occurred an event which was destined to become of the utmost importance to this story. While playing one day Louis-Charles ruptured himself. The Queen at once asked for a certain specialist who had been employed by the court before the Revolution, Hippolyte Pipelet. The Commune refused her request, and sent a prison doctor. Soon afterwards Hébert and Chaumette, both drunk, visited the Temple, and Marie-Antoinette renewed her demand for Pipelet. He himself went to the Commune and asked for authority to attend the sick child. He was hissed and insulted, but gained his request. Accompanied by two Commissioners he undressed and examined the child. His orders were to diagnose the ailment as a disease inherited from the boy's mother, and due to her immorality, but he refused to lend himself to such an infamy, and reported that the boy had ruptured himself while riding astride a stick, and that he would soon be healed. Within three weeks he was cured.

Meanwhile, Batz, under the name of Forget, had done a day's guard at the Temple, to reconnoitre the position, and the night of June 21 and June 22 was fixed for the attempt, when Michonis and Cortey would both be on

duty. When the night arrived Michonis got rid of his colleague Simon, who was only too glad to go out and drink, and himself took up his position near the prisoners. In the guard-room at the foot of the Tower were Cortey and his men. Outside in the streets waited Hyde de Neuville and other royalists, whose task it would be to drive the refugees to Brie-Comte-Robert, where there was a temporary hiding-place. About midnight, when all was ready and Michonis was about to bring the royal family down the stairs, Simon the shoemaker arrived in a great hurry. 'If I had not seen you here,' he said to Cortey, 'I should have been most uneasy.' He then rushed up the stairs, and insisted on seeing the prisoners, at the same time telling Michonis that he was ordered to present himself at the Town Hall without delay. Cortey, meanwhile, with singular presence of mind, marched his men, including 'Forget,' out into the streets on the pretext of seeing that all was quiet; and thus Batz was saved. Michonis answered the questions put to him at the Town Hall so cleverly and with such a display of honest good-humour that everyone thought Simon had been fooled by some practical joker. Indeed Simon's explanation of his conduct was melodramatic enough. He said that on returning to the Temple he had been given a paper found at the main gate. On it was written: 'Michonis is going to turn traitor to-night. Be on the watch!' However fantastic this may sound, the fact remains that Simon's inopportune arrival wrecked the plan of escape.

It will be observed that the whole episode is a mysterious one. Simon must have worked very quickly to go to the Town Hall with his story, and return with an order for

Michonis in time to forestall the conspirators. Possibly someone at the Commune knew of the plot from a spy, and intended Simon, who was reserved for the honour of being the guardian of the Dauphin, to be the hero of the occasion. Then, what of Tison and his wife? How were they to be disposed of during the critical moments of the escape? And what steps were taken to deal with any stray members of the large garrison scattered about the outbuildings or in the old palace of the Grand Prior? Why does Turgu not mention the attempt? Why did Simon say nothing about it when Michonis appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal in connexion with his plot to rescue Marie-Antoinette from the Conciergerie? Some have said, being baffled by these mysteries, that the conspiracy, like many others at this time, never got beyond the stage of general discussion. Against that theory we have the statement of de Neuville that Michonis summoned him for eleven o'clock on the night of the attempt. There are also references to the plot in the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety and in a letter of the Committee of General Security to Fouquier-Tinville. Eckard, of course, is the principal source of information. Beauchesne and Chantelauze follow him. One of the most interesting details in their account is that Batz was on the point of shooting Simon dead, and making a dash for it, when he realised that the shot would alarm the garrison, and make escape impossible for the prisoners.

However much the Commune affected to laugh at Simon's story, the extremists were growing more and more conscious of an atmosphere of conspiracy, and were pressing for the trial of the Queen and Mme. Elizabeth,

or, at any rate, for the separation of the boy from his mother, which Robespierre had suggested as long ago as March. They knew that the *émigrés* with the armies of the Coalition were talking of restoring the Monarchy, in the person of Louis-Charles, with perhaps Marie-Antoinette as regent. They knew the manifesto of the western rebels, claiming that their wish was the wish of France—‘to have a king.’ They saw in the Temple the traitress and her son, rallying points for all who hated the Revolution, and Barère cried that the Republic was a besieged fortress. Prussia was plodding towards Alsace, Austria was making ready to invest the line of fortresses on the Belgian frontier, but each had an eye on Poland, and each suspected the other of overreaching him in the matter of the Partition. As to the partition of France—that looked like being a mere scramble, with England fostering hatred between her two allies, and coming off best in the end. The misunderstandings and the jealousies slowed down the invasion, and gave the Republic time to call up that irresistible fighting spirit which saved it at the eleventh hour. But as June drew to a close the story of August 1792 was repeated. There were rumours that the prisons were full of conspirators who would make a concerted effort at a given signal, that the *émigrés* were slipping back across the frontiers. On June 30 a deputation from the Section Pont-Neuf laid before the Committee of Public Safety details of General Dillon’s plan to rescue the Dauphin by force, to march on the Convention, and to proclaim Louis-Charles king. This was the culmination of an ever-present fear. And once more men attributed all their misfortunes to that family which had brought

into being the Coalition, and now plotted to undo all that the Revolution had accomplished. On July 1 Cambon announced in the Convention that General Dillon and his colleagues had been arrested, and that the Committee of Public Safety had signed an order to the effect that Louis-Charles should be separated from his mother, and placed in the most secure part of the Tower; also that the General Council of the Commune should appoint for him a guardian and tutor. The order was carried out two days later.

The family were together in the Queen's room on the evening of July 3. Darkness had fallen, and the two women were sewing by candlelight. The boy was asleep, and to keep the light from his eyes his mother had stretched a shawl about the bed. Between the two women sat Mme. Royale, reading aloud to them as they worked. It was one of those brief hours, so highly prized by them now, in which they could cheat themselves with vain hope; encouraged by the tranquillity about them to believe that they had suffered all that they must suffer. Nothing warned them of what was to come swiftly out of the night. And when they heard upon the stone stairs the sound of men's feet, and voices, they suspected nothing to which they were not by now accustomed; a surprise visit, a few formal questions. Perhaps they noticed that there was more noise than usual. But before they could speak of the clatter, the door opened, and six Commissioners strode into the room. One of them immediately spoke a few words in a peremptory fashion. 'We are here,' he said, 'to notify to you the order of the Committee, that Capet's son be separated from his

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mother and his family.' Rhetoric would be out of place to describe the scene that followed, nor can any art or trick of writing convey the agony of the Queen. She lost her majesty and that dignity which had been a weapon in her former moments of trial. Instinctively she placed herself by the bed, in front of her child, and refused to give him up. When anger and threats failed to move the Commissioners, she pleaded with them, and those men of the people—a carpenter, a house-painter, a shopkeeper, and so on—can have had no easy task in ignoring her threats and resisting her appeal to their better feelings. When the boy awoke and understood what was toward, he broke into a passion of weeping, and clung to his mother, hiding his face against her. Every time the men made a movement to seize the boy, the Queen, aided by Mme. Elizabeth and Mme. Royale, shielded him and prepared, if necessary, to meet force by force. For the Commissioners the position became more ludicrous the longer it continued—and Mme. Royale says in her account that the scene lasted an hour—and finally one of them said roughly that if the Queen would not obey the order of the Committee, they would have to call up the guard, and have her son wrested from her. At that she saw that further opposition was purposeless, and, exhausted from the struggle, she took the boy from his bed. The two women and the girl, still weeping, dressed him, and when he was ready, his mother bade him go with the Commissioners. He clung to her still, frightened and miserable, and she asked them to let her see him sometimes, to let her take her meals with him. Then she said to him that he must not forget her, but always remember how deeply



she loved him. She kissed him, and the men took him away down the stairs to the room where he had seen the last of his father six months before. The three who were left in the room on the third floor heard him sobbing and crying out as the Commissioners dragged him towards the stone steps.

## CHAPTER V

### SIMON THE COBBLER; THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE

ON that night of July 3 the terrified boy was handed over to the man whom the Commune—that is, Chaumette—had chosen to act as his tutor and guardian; also, of course, as spy, since it was necessary to collect evidence against his mother. Chaumette had contented himself with saying that ‘the aristocrat must be made into a democrat, and must get rid of the prejudices of his caste and his rank.’ The choice of Gaspard Chaumette, once a monk, and now calling himself Anaxagoras, fell upon a shoemaker—his own father’s profession. Antoine Simon had proved his republicanism, and Chaumette was able to point to the fact that he, single-handed, had exposed a plot, and frustrated the conspirators at the critical moment, only two weeks before his appointment to this new post. The extreme royalist theory, that this man was given the task of torturing Louis-Charles, and killing him by slow degrees, I take to be as fantastic as the extreme republican theory that he was intended to be an instrument merely of Chaumette’s faith in a democratic education. The one side has exaggerated the cruelties which he practised, while the other has over-emphasised his kindly stupidity. Since his name has been the centre of

so much controversy, it may be well to examine him briefly.

Simon, at the time of his appointment, was fifty-seven years of age. In appearance he was thickset, rather above middle height, swarthy and distinctly unpleasant looking. He had been a bad shoemaker, and had never made a success of his life. For a time he ran a cheap eating-house in the rue de Seine, but although he borrowed whenever and wherever he could, he was finally sold up. After living in extreme misery in a single room with his wife, and pawning what personal possessions remained to him, he was left a widower, overburdened with debt. He married a second time, a large, solid, respectable charwoman with a little money of her own. The Revolution found him disgruntled, but no longer in want, living in the Cordeliers section, the obscure neighbour of Danton, Marat, Desmoulins and Chaumette. A man past fifty does not easily begin a new career. The Revolution awoke Simon, and he soon became one of the horde who played an active and inconspicuous part, with, at first, no higher motive than the desire to take vengeance on a world which he considered had treated him badly. His wife won praise for her efficient nursing of the wounded of August 10, '92, and her reputation for honest zeal helped her husband. But neither he nor she dreamed that one day in the near future he would step into the shoes of Fénelon and sleep in the bed of Louis XVI in the late King's room at the Temple. But an almost illiterate boor, with a brusque manner and the foul tongue of the faubourgs, was exactly what Chaumette needed. He was stupid enough to do what he was told without asking questions and he had no



effort to make to treat the King's son as he treated the sons of workpeople. He had heard enough mob oratory in the last four years to enable him to seize on the purely destructive ideas preached by the worst of the careerists. For he was completely without intelligence or instruction. It is not difficult to imagine the effect upon such a man of being entrusted with the heir to all the splendour of the French Crown. For the first time in his life he was important and successful, and by now there went, side by side with the desire to make up for the best years of his life spent in penury and discomfort, a thoroughly stupid man's ambition to turn the Dauphin into a *sansculotte*.

I have said that both his irrational cruelty and his blind republican faith have been exaggerated for the purposes of propaganda. Those whose task it is to prove that Louis XVII died in prison lose no chance of showing that the boy's health was undermined by the brutality of his guardian. They reiterate that Simon was a drunken sot, that he had an ungovernable temper, that by threat and blow he wrecked the boy's nerves and broke his spirit; and that this treatment was but the execution of the plan conceived by the extremists, who repeatedly said that the Republic would not be secure so long as the heir of Louis XVI remained alive to be an emblem of reaction. This legend of the inhuman cruelty of Simon, handed down by so many royalist writers, finds support in an unexpected quarter. Two of the principal pretenders, Hervagault and Richemont, drawing partly on their imagination, partly on hearsay evidence, and largely on the romance of Regnault-Warin, can find nothing too bad

to say of the shoemaker. On the other side, those who seek to prove that the Dauphin escaped from the Temple, faced with the problem of his failing health, present Simon as a rather jovial companion for the boy, with a rough tongue, perhaps, and unpolished manners, but a good soul, under whose care Louis-Charles was reasonably healthy. The truth, I think, lies between insane cruelty and kindly interest. There is not the slightest doubt that the child was abominably ill-treated. It is not necessary to believe that he was habitually beaten, but it is necessary to believe that Simon was something more than a blundering fool who did not realise the effect he was having.

What was that effect, put at its mildest, likely to be? Here was a boy, brought up at Versailles, at St. Cloud, at the Tuileries, accustomed, from his earliest days, to the ritual of the Court, to cultured conversation, to an atmosphere of lineage all about him. Those who approached him were noble, and they paid him deference. Everything that happened to him made him conscious that he lived in a world where he was presently to command. Between each of the sudden and incomprehensible shocks to which the Revolution subjected him, the substance of his daily life was little changed. Right up to August 10, '92, the façade of monarchy, which was almost all that a little child would notice, remained the same. Familiar faces disappeared, his pleasures were interrupted, he scented a vague peril which disturbed his father and mother; but round him were the old uniforms. The old ceremonial began his day and ended it. The details of his life remained spacious. In the Temple at the beginning of the captivity, though the rooms in which he moved

and played were small and meanly furnished when compared with those he had known, yet the servitors to whom he was accustomed waited at table, and the new conditions of his life were rather puzzling than disturbing. As time went on, whatever had happened, he had been with his family, and had always had protection against the occasional insolence of a Commissioner. But now, and for the first time, that protection which, like every child, he had taken for granted, had failed him. He was dragged by torchlight into a room that recalled his father to him, and confronted by a repellent old man with lank hair and an unpleasant face; an old man who spoke gutter-slang. And those who had brought him down the stairs left him alone with this stranger. There is no reason to doubt his sister's statement that for two days and nights he wept bitterly, and begged to be taken back to his mother. During that time he ate nothing but a few morsels of bread.

No explanation was given to him for this separation, and from the first he was naturally afraid of Simon, whose voice was harsh as his face was forbidding, and who swore whenever he spoke. During these first days, while acute misery was settling into dull unhappiness, Paris echoed with strange rumours. It was said that the Dauphin was no longer in the Temple, and that he had been seen in a certain street; that he had been taken to St. Cloud, there to be proclaimed King; that Dillon's conspiracy had succeeded, and that Chaumette was the ringleader in the affair, having had an interview with the Queen. The rumours assumed such proportions that Robespierre took pains to deny them in the Convention on July 6.

But it needed more than this denial to reassure the people, and the Committee of Public Safety sent a deputation to the Temple. They found that even the guards, who had not seen the boy since he had been taken from his mother, believed the story of his rescue. Going up to the second floor, they found him playing draughts with Simon. To settle the matter, they ordered him to be brought down into the garden, where all might see him. There he asked to be taken back to his mother, and bade them show him the order by which he had been separated from her. He was left with Simon, and the deputation went to the Queen's room to question her. Drouet, who recalled so much to her, was the spokesman. He asked if she wanted anything. 'I want my son,' she replied. Drouet said the boy was being well cared for by a patriot. She said, 'He has never been away from me. He has need of me. He is still in ill-health. I cannot believe that the Convention will fail to see how legitimate are my complaints.'

The picture of the boy peacefully playing draughts with his guardian, only three days after his separation from his mother has provided certain writers with the chance of crying, 'There, now! And this is the ogre who is supposed to have ill-treated the boy.' But the phrase 'Quietly playing draughts with his mentor' is taken from the report of the deputation, a document which omits all mention of the distress of the boy as of the complaints of his mother. One sentence in the report says that some people are spreading rumours abroad that the prisoners are ill-treated. The game of draughts comes in very conveniently as a reply.



At this time Simon's comfortable wife joined him in the Temple. She was an uneducated countrywoman, as stupid as her husband, but more inclined to treat the boy well. 'I've got a grand position,' she said to a friend. 'They'll take me there in a carriage.' But kind though she may have been, the transition from the ministrations of ladies of the nobility to those of this fat red-handed charwoman must have been another source of suffering for the boy.

Most of the scanty information which we possess on his life in the Tower under Simon is traditional. Here and there an official document occurs, but the legend which everyone knows is built up on a foundation of scraps and fragments gathered from survivors—Commissioners, guards and others—by the earliest historians of the captivity. What we have to remember is that those who told the stories or repeated the anecdotes years afterwards had a double motive for colouring their reminiscences. It was to their advantage to please their questioners, and also to show that they had really been royalists all the time. The early historians also had a motive for believing anything that would help them to prove false the claim that the Dauphin had not died in prison. Discarding what looks like violent exaggeration on one side or the other, it is clear that Simon took his tutoring seriously, as Chaumette and Hébert intended he should. The subjects he was qualified to teach were foul language and street-songs. So young a boy would naturally find a novelty in strange words which he could not understand, and it will be remembered that his mother said of him that he was inclined to repeat what he was told. After a time his

sister heard him joining in Simon's songs and blasphemies, standing by the window, so that the guards below should enjoy the performance. And there is sound evidence that one Commissioner heard him use a phrase so filthy and so heartless that Simon's evil influence cannot for a moment be doubted. At this time the food was still plentiful, and one of the shoemaker's favourite occupations was to make the boy overeat grossly, and drink large quantities of wine, as he did not like wine. Simon himself frequently drank too much, and it was at these times that he became most brutal, shouting at the boy, probably striking him on occasion, and making him wait on him. Nothing of this is out of character. A drunken boor with a grievance against the world, finding himself master of a King's son, would enjoy, among other revenges, that of inflicting humiliation. If it be asked why the Commissioners and the guards, many of them with sons of their own, made no complaint to the Commune or the Committee, the answer is that most of them were afraid to appear to sympathise with Louis-Charles. Those few who risked it were a warning to the others. Leboeuf, for instance, who objected to the child being taught indecent songs, was told that he was worshipping an idol, and was dealt with by the police.

Marie-Antoinette made request daily to be allowed to have her son with her again, but no notice was taken of her demands. Although the circumstances in which he had been dragged away and her knowledge of the state of his health allowed her no peace of mind, she was spared knowledge of the brutalisation of the boy. Tison, either from remorse, or because he was genuinely

moved by the sufferings which he saw, mended his ways, and it was through him that the Queen had her scanty news of Louis-Charles. Needless to say, she was not told the truth. There was a conspiracy to keep it from her. For either Tison or one of the Commissioners brought a fuller account of what was going on to Mme. Elizabeth and the girl. For their news of the outside world they still depended mainly on the faithful Turgot, who corresponded with Toulan (referred to in notes as Fidèle). For his part in the first attempted escape Toulan had been struck off the roll of Commissioners, but he still continued to be of what service he could. Through him they had news of friends, and of what was happening in the Convention.

After the visit of Drouet and his colleagues it was ordered that the Dauphin should be exercised every day in the garden, less because his health required the fresh air than because this was an easy way of stopping further rumours of an escape from spreading among the guards, and from them to their families. It became the set purpose of his mother to catch a glimpse of him, as he went by, from a small window, or through a half-open door. Since there was no fixed time for his exercise, she would take up her position and wait hour after hour for this brief sight of him. This, as her daughter wrote afterwards, was the only pleasure left to her. That guards, Commissioners and others within the Temple should have consented to be a party to such a slow torture gives us the measure of the discipline established, and the fear of the Commune which sealed the lips of men of normally decent instincts.

Throughout these July days the heavy shadow of the invading armies fell across Paris, and day by day the ultimate fate of the Queen became more obvious. In this time of crisis her treachery was remembered, and so fierce was the hatred which the extremists felt for her that the wiser policy of still holding her as a hostage, a counter with which to strike a bargain, was abandoned. The forces were gathering for those more than twenty years of fighting which were to become a conflict between the wealth of England and the Revolution. The challenge to England, as Bainville pointed out, had been not the execution of Louis XVI, but the capture of Antwerp. And the score was not settled until Waterloo had been fought. In this month of crisis Condé capitulated, because the garrison had no food, Valenciennes fell, and only Maubeuge held back the Austrians from Paris. No other serious obstacle remained on the north-eastern frontier. On the Rhine Mayence capitulated, and Goethe, standing on an embankment, watched the tattered men of Marseilles march out with the honours of war, and noted their sullen faces, and heard the band of the mounted troops strike up the *Marseillaise*. Only the lines of Weissembourg held. Elsewhere matters were no better. At either end of the Pyrenees Perpignan and Bayonne were threatened by the Spaniards. There was civil war in the south and in the west. Piedmont awaited its moment to strike. To meet all these perils the Committee of Public Safety was reorganised. Couthon and St. Just came in, and shortly afterwards, at the end of the month, Robespierre. Danton was dropped. With his disappearance from the Committee the Terror entered on that

phase of madness which permitted the wholesale destruction of all who could be suspected of favouring a less savage form of martial law. Religion was submitted to a fiercer and more comprehensive persecution, famine increased, Toulon opened its harbour to the English and Spanish fleets. There is no doubt that at this moment many in high places or low would have welcomed the restoration of the Monarchy. But those who had been called in to save the Monarchy saw the matter in a different light. What they imagined to be the inevitable break-up of France was their chance, not for the proclamation of Louis XVII as King, but for plunder. France could be as easily partitioned as Poland. And for that point of view, so distasteful to the by now disillusioned *émigrés*, we have the evidence of Mercy's cynical question when one of the French nobility objected to the flying of the Austrian flag over captured Valenciennes: 'Did you, then, imagine that we were making war for love of you?'

Increased agitation in the Sections against the prisoners accompanied the ever graver news from the frontiers, and when the announcement of the fall of Valenciennes was made, many knew that in less than two weeks they might hear the Austrian guns. Barère, in the Convention, on August 1, at the end of a tirade against England, suggested that the Governments of the Coalition had been emboldened by France's apparent forgetfulness of the crimes of the 'Austrian woman.' 'It is time,' he said, 'to destroy every offshoot of royalty.' There followed the reading of various measures. The first provided for the transference of the Queen to the Conciergerie, and her subsequent trial. Another provided for the curtailing of

expense in the feeding and clothing of her two children. A third ordered the destruction of the tombs of the Kings in the church of St. Denis and throughout the Republic.

At two o'clock in the morning of August 2, the Queen was awakened by those who came to read the decree of the Convention. She listened quietly while it was read out to her, well knowing that she was already condemned to death. Mme. Elizabeth and Mme. Royale asked to be allowed to go with her to the Conciergerie. No notice was taken of the demand. The Queen, still watched by the Commissioners, collected her clothes and made a parcel of them. She was searched, and the articles found in her pockets were put together and carried away by one of the men. They left her a small flask and a handkerchief. She then embraced her daughter, bidding her be courageous and take care of her health. The girl was unable to speak, knowing that this parting was final. Having likewise embraced Mme. Elizabeth, she made a sign that she was ready to follow her guards. On coming through the low door of the Tower she struck her head, having forgotten to stoop. One of the men enquired if she had hurt herself, and she replied, 'There is nothing now can hurt me any more.'

Of all this the boy knew nothing; yet he was to play a terrible part in the trial of his mother. There were moderate men who hoped, by bluff, to induce the allies to negotiate. They thought that the mere announcement of the Queen's approaching trial, and all the rumours accompanying such an announcement, would force the hand of the Austrian Emperor. But those who believed in a different method prevailed. It was Hébert's 'I have

promised the head of Antoinette ' which put into words the feeling that without this staggering crime no foreigner would believe that the Revolution was in earnest, and that to appal Europe was better than to try a hazardous piece of bluff. And it was Hébert who determined that nothing should go amiss in the trial. The accusation that the object of Simon's ill-treatment of the Dauphin was to break down his will-power and so to obtain complete domination over him is fantastic for two reasons; first, because one does not plan a long and barbarous campaign in order to master the will of a far from healthy child of eight; secondly, because Simon was far too stupid to think out anything of that sort. But the fact remains that Simon's control of the boy turned out most useful for Hébert's purpose. During August he continued to ' democratise ' Louis-Charles, who contracted a fever and had to have medical attention. But as soon as he was well, the régime which was so surely undermining his health continued; overeating, too much to drink, too little air and exercise. Mme. Elizabeth, who continued to receive news of the Dauphin, though the discipline had once more been tightened up, and communication was more difficult—Mme. Elizabeth tried to find some Commissioner with courage enough to remonstrate with Simon, or to report him to the Commune, so that the boy might be treated less cruelly. But under the Terror he was a man who valued his life little who would undertake such a task, whatever his feelings might dictate to him. One such she found, a man named Barelle. He intervened, but to no purpose, except perhaps that his honourable action, by infuriating Simon, made things even worse for the

prisoner. Mme. Elizabeth tried again. Tison's little daughter, prompted by Mme. Elizabeth, asked permission to see Louis-Charles. It was not granted, but when Simon heard of the request, he became enraged.

Nobody will ever know the details of the Dauphin's daily life at this time. Of the slow change that came over him we can only judge by the few facts that not even Simon's apologists have denied. They, the apologists, calling our knowledge of human nature to witness, would have us remember that a little boy of eight and a few months grows quickly accustomed to fresh surroundings and a new way of life; that he adapts himself rapidly to the most unlikely conditions; that his sufferings are acute, but brief; that Louis-Charles, between his guardian's drunken bouts, could laugh and play and read and amuse himself as he thought fit; that the life he led was probably much like the life which Simon's son would have led—or the son of any working-man of Simon's type. There is probably far more truth in the picture of the very sensitive boy suffering intensely, continually asking for his mother, and being terrified into doing what was demanded of him to avoid further ill-treatment. It is not possible that within a few months such a child should have taken his new life for granted, and become a happy little guttersnipe—especially as he thought his mother was still on the floor above him. Apart from the testimony of Mme. Royale, we may take for granted the deterioration of his health, which had not, since his infancy, been robust. The stories told of his indecent songs and his foul language may or may not be true. They are what one would naturally expect. He was imitative, as we know, and had



a retentive memory. In any case most of Simon's gross talk can have meant nothing to him.

The increasingly bad news from the frontiers throughout August strengthened the hand of those who demanded the Queen's head. Had the turning-point in the Revolution come earlier, her life might have been spared. In mid-August, Carnot, the Burgundian soldier, entered the Committee of Public Safety and at once began to forge mere phrases into realities. With an enormous capacity for hard work, a brain of the first class, and a genius for organisation, he set to work to create his instrument of victory, but his effect was not to be felt in time to save the Queen. Coburg was before le Quesnoy; the Duke of York, with a mixed force of English, Hanoverians and Austrians, was marching, or rather crawling, on Dunkirk. It seemed that the Republic was doomed, yet all hesitated to take the responsibility of bringing up the Queen for trial. Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, was complaining that he had no papers relative to the matter in hand. Michonis appeared at the Conciergerie with a note in a bunch of pinks. But the reply was handed over to the Committee, and the plot failed by the same narrow margin as the others, and by much the same ill-luck. By this time—it was at the end of the month—the extremists were sure of success. The news of the attempted escape increased their fury, and at the beginning of September further talk of bargaining with the Coalition gave Hébert the opportunity for the outburst which I have mentioned: 'I have promised the head of Antoinette. . . .' But when it became a matter of drawing up the indictment, Fouquier-Tinville was doubtful of the result. The case

seemed to rest upon a hotch-potch of old rumours, accusations brought against the King, and so forth. Hébert and Chaumette, determined to leave nothing to chance, had a trump card to play. They decided that Louis-Charles should bear witness not only against his mother, but against his aunt. And Simon was the very man to help this scheme to success.

Throughout the month the tension in Paris increased. Le Quesnoy fell to Coburg, and only Maubeuge remained between Paris and the invaders; between the new world and the old world which it had challenged. Hébert came to the Temple, with four colleagues, to put into execution a fresh decree of the Commune. He saw Louis-Charles, but his main business was with Simon. This finished, he visited Mme. Royale and Mme. Elizabeth, and the new orders were read out. There were to be rigid economies. The meals were to be more frugal—no poultry, no pastry. Cheaper candles were to be supplied, and cheaper crockery—pewter and earthenware in place of silver and porcelain. In the interests of strict equality, the prisoners were henceforth to be deprived of all service, save the ordinary prison service. They were to sweep and dust their rooms themselves and make their own beds. Tison, for obvious reasons, was removed and shut up as a prisoner in a room of the Tower. A day or two later coarse yellow sheets were substituted for the white ones, the rooms were meticulously searched, personal belongings confiscated on the slightest pretext, and even a few relics of Louis XVI seized. The prisoners were forbidden to go up to the platform of the Tower for their daily exercise. The object was to make escape

impossible, and to cut them off entirely from the outside world. They depended now for news on an occasional voice shouting in the streets, or a word now and then from a Commissioner more amiable than the majority of them. Louis-Charles himself escaped some of these new rigours, because it was important not to interfere too much with Simon's pleasures—which were principally food and drink. It might have been hard to replace him.

September passed. Maubeuge still held, but by a thread. It was a question of starvation or surrender, and with Maubeuge out of the way Coburg could walk into Paris at his leisure. In the Convention a demand was made for the immediate trial of Marie-Antoinette. Fouquier-Tinville, who knew that his job was to get the Queen found guilty without any hitch, replied that the Revolutionary Tribunal was only too anxious to start the proceedings, but that there was nothing to start them with. So while a search was being made for various papers, there came from Simon, most opportunely, an important message. It appeared that for some time past the Dauphin had been begging for a chance to make known certain facts of the highest importance. He had revealed these facts to his faithful guardian, but it was only right that he should be given an opportunity of repeating them to Hébert and Chaumette. It may well be imagined that the two friends, who had no official connection with the trial, felt it their duty to hurry to the Temple in answer to this message. Never doubting that the information they were about to receive would be worth the visit, they took with them Pache, the mayor, and four officials of the Commune. Chairs, a table and writing materials awaited

them, and one of their number, Laurent, undertook the duties of clerk. What took place on that Sunday, October 6, should be recorded as baldly and briefly as possible. The boy denounced his mother, accusing her of having counter-revolutionary activities both in the Tuileries and at the Temple, and mentioning Toulan, Lepitre and other Commissioners who had been friendly as her accomplices. He then accused her of corrupting his morals, even to the extent of teaching him the sin of Oedipus. His signature to the statements which he repeated as a lesson, and, of course, uncomprehendingly, may be seen in the Museum of the National Archives in Paris, or reproduced by Beauchesne in his second volume. It is followed by the signatures of the rest of those who were present, and the interesting thing about it is that the handwriting is that of a child of four or five, extremely shaky, and in striking contrast to the writing in his exercise books.

The tradition in this matter, founded upon the theory of the two earliest chroniclers of the event, who knew and spoke to survivors of the period of captivity, is that Simon had first starved the boy and then made him drunk. This would explain the signature, but it is difficult to believe that he could have repeated his lesson so aptly with the fumes of wine in his brain. An alternative explanation would be that he was terrified, for although he could not have understood a word of his second accusation, in the first—that of plotting against the Revolution—he must have known what he was saying. The names he mentioned were familiar to him. There is a third, a remote possibility: that Simon, who had taught him every

kind of blasphemy and indecency in speech, had succeeded in giving even so young a child an idea of the monstrous nature of the charge he was to bring. But in that case, the Dauphin would not have done what was required of him without having first lost control of his reason.

On the next day, October 7, Pache and Chaumette again came to the Temple, accompanied by the painter David, who never lost an opportunity of using his talent against his honour, and by several officials. They went up to the third floor, where Mme. Royale and her aunt had just finished sweeping and tidying their room, and Pache asked the girl to be good enough to follow him downstairs. Mme. Elizabeth, frightened at this sudden summons, tried to accompany her, but Chaumette bade her have no fear. 'Count,' said he, 'on the word of a good Republican. She will come back.' So Mme. Royale embraced her aunt, and followed the men. As she went she prayed for guidance and protection. On the stairs, she says in her account, Chaumette made a show of gallantry, but she ignored him. At the foot of the stairs she saw her brother and ran to him, but Mme. Simon pulled her away and told her to go into the room where the cross-examination was to take place. She was asked to sit down opposite Chaumette, while an official prepared to note down her answers to the questions they put to her. She was questioned about Toulon and the other Commissioners, and said she did not know them—a lie so obvious that it startled her questioner. She went on, still lying, to deny any knowledge of whispered conversations. The Dauphin was then brought in. They sat

him in a chair, and he swung his legs, which were too short to reach the ground, and repeated the accusations of the day before. Mme. Royale was asked if they were true. She denied every word of these horrors. They pressed her, but could get nothing but denial from her. So they passed to Varennes, and the loathsome comedy played itself as they had wished. When Mme. Royale lied, her brother corrected her, reminding her that there were certain things she could not have forgotten. Once or twice she gave in to his contradictions and corrected herself. Chaumette had told her at the beginning of his cross-examination that all this had nothing to do with her mother. She must have found it difficult to believe him ! At any rate, by opposing the two children to each other Chaumette succeeded in building up his case against their mother. But he had not finished. When Mme. Royale was released her aunt was summoned. This saintly woman was put through the same kind of cross-examination. She admitted that she knew the Commissioners mentioned, by name and by sight, but denied that there had been communication, through them, with people outside the prison. To the shameful charges to which the boy had put his signature she replied with great dignity that it was beneath her to make any answer to such infamous talk. And when Louis-Charles repeated that what he said was true, she said: '*Oh, le monstre !*' But one who was there said that this cry was due to amazement, and not to horror. This witness told Goret that the whole attitude of Louis-Charles during the questioning proved that he was repeating a lesson.

The report was duly signed, and Mme. Elizabeth

returned to her niece, while Simon took the boy back to his room. He was never to see any of his family again.

Many who have thought that the chronicle of this child's sufferings was not dramatic enough have repeated the story that when he realised what he had done, he became afflicted with a black melancholy which destroyed his health, and have sought to explain in this way his later taciturnity. Common sense will tell us that there needed no such mental torture to bring him to a decline. It is more reasonable to believe that he never knew what he had done, and therefore did not suffer from remorse. He heard nothing of his mother's trial; of her famous reply to the revolting calumnies of Hébert; of her last letter to Mme. Elizabeth, in which she implored her to bear no ill-feelings toward the boy—'it is so easy to make a child say what one wants him to say, even if he does not understand it.' Her death on October 16 was kept from him, and from the two other prisoners, who believed that either negotiations by the Emperor of Austria or a victory of his armies might still save the Queen's life. They were ignorant of that moment on the first day of her trial, when the public sympathy in the galleries was aroused by Hébert's clumsiness in repeating his insane charges—aroused to such an extent that Robespierre accused Hébert of having tried to save the Queen by getting the mob on her side. They knew nothing of the chivalry of de Busne on the second day of the trial, and of how he was denounced for bringing her a glass of water, and for offering her his arm when she said, 'I cannot see.'

The two women waited, hardly daring to hope. The

boy played and chattered. And out on the frontiers the future of a people was being decided. The Prussians had forced the lines of Weissembourg, and their way through Alsace was open. But in the north-east Maubeuge, by a miracle, was still untaken. By an irony of history it was on the morning of the Queen's execution that the Austrian left flank in front of Maubeuge was turned by Carnot and Jourdan in the lifting mist, and the resounding victory of Wattignies relieved the fortress, saved Paris and restored the young Republic's faith in itself.

The Terror, firmly established, led to closer supervision at the Temple, and further economies. The concierge Mathey was replaced by the energetic Coru, and this time Simon and his wife did not escape. Their food was cut down, and Simon began to be less contented with his position. It was probably the success of his recent manoeuvres which encouraged him to send in to the Commune, towards the end of October, a preposterous account of a conversation with Louis-Charles, in the presence of two Commissioners. This time the boy was made to accuse a man called Jobert, on duty at the Temple, of passing notes to the Queen, and to add that his aunt was the chief agent in these little conspiracies. This was too trivial, even for the Commune, and no action was taken. Later on Simon tried again. The Commune was informed that for more than a week 'Charles Capet' had been worrying himself to death for a chance to make a declaration to the Council, since what he had to disclose concerned the safety of the Republic. The declaration, even more ludicrous than the last, was as follows. For



two or three weeks he, Louis-Charles, had heard every evening, between six and nine o'clock, a knocking sound which came from upstairs. From the additional noise of footsteps overhead, he concluded that his aunt and his sister were hiding something in the bay of their bedroom window. He was not certain, of course, but it might be forged assignats which they were hiding there, preparatory to passing them through the window to friends outside. And, now he came to think of it, he remembered that before he was separated from them he had seen an arrangement by which he imagined the prisoners could have communicated with his late father. He was sure that messages were exchanged, and he remembered having seen his family much perturbed when a note fell into the courtyard outside their window. The latter part of the statement may have been true. He could scarcely have been ignorant of what went on. But obviously he would not have given this information of his own free will. The first part of the statement was so absurd that Simon's nerve failed him at the last moment. When questioned by the Commissioners, he denied having heard the sounds, as he suffered a little from deafness. But his wife came to the rescue. She had heard the noise. She probably had. It was made by the girl and her aunt moving their pieces at their evening game of backgammon. As a beginning of the hounding of Mme. Elizabeth it was not a very brilliant move. The master-stroke of witlessness is the statement that Louis-Charles was consumed with anxiety for the safety of the Republic. However, when Mme. Elizabeth was brought up for trial, this document appeared among the evidence against her.

It was about this time, according to the historians Eckard and Simien-Despréaux, that the treatment which the boy had received, and the unnatural conditions of his life, began seriously to undermine his never too robust constitution. One of the kitchen-servants who still remained noticed that at the sight of any group of municipal officials he was seized with terror, and refused to answer their questions. He would only speak when he found himself alone with one of them who was disposed to be friendly. There is an important observation to be made on this. It is suspect because it looks so like an attempt to discredit the theory of the later substitution of a dumb child. This refusal to answer questions is an explanation for those who said that the child from whom Harmand and his colleagues could later get no reply was not the Dauphin. It is perfectly natural that he should have been afraid of the officials, and that he should have distrusted some and trusted others, as any other child in his position would have done. Perhaps he did become silent and unhappy. He had every reason to do so. But the word of Gagnié, the kitchen-servant in question, like the word of all who saw the importance, under the Restoration, of showing pity and of hinting that they were more kindly disposed than was possibly the case, must not be taken too easily.

At any rate, although the campaign of economy affected him, Louis-Charles had a little more chance at this time to forget his sufferings. Barelle, who has been mentioned, played with him whenever he could, and since his colleagues looked upon him as a simpleton, they did not interfere. And Simon himself, according to those

who have least good to say of him, no longer played the tyrant; whether his conscience had begun to stir, or whether he thought there was no more to be got out of bullying the boy, or whether he was growing tired of his position, we do not know. It is certain, however, that he disliked the new restrictions as to meals, and the order forbidding him and his wife to walk in the garden. He was now enjoined not to lose sight of his prisoner for a moment, and on no condition to leave the Tower, as he had been allowed to do formerly. In order to have something to employ his time, he put in an application for a billiard-table, and as there was one in the old palace, it was moved into the Tower by an order of the Council, whose members were only too glad to find some way of amusing themselves. Louis-Charles was allowed to come into the billiard-room and to watch the game. But, thanks to Barelle, something happened at this time which meant more to him than this new privilege. A little girl, the eight-year-old daughter of the prison laundress, was encouraged to make friends with the boy. This was his first chance to enjoy the normal fun of childhood with a companion since that visit to the remote garden in Paris in the summer of 1792. And it would seem that the gratitude of the boy and the immediate improvement in his spirits touched some nerve of compassion in the cobbler. At any rate a genuine attempt was made to amuse Louis-Charles. Simon asked the Council to sanction the installation in his room of an artificial canary in a cage. The Commissioners even went to the trouble of having the machinery repaired. Coru, who had prescribed economies the moment he replaced Mathey, went

round the streets in the neighbourhood of the prison, asking the people for canaries, and collected a number, which he put into the cage when the trills of the mechanical bird began to bore Louis-Charles. But, of course, these innocent pleasures depended upon the kindness of certain Commissioners. One day, it is said, two of a different type put an end to the singing of the canaries. According to the story told by Gagnié to Simien-Despréaux, these two men entered the Dauphin's room while the mechanical canary was singing its tune—the 'Marche du Roi.' The boy's favourite bird had apparently learnt the tune, and was accompanying its lifeless mate. 'What!' roared one of the Commissioners, 'these birds are allowed to sing a proscribed air, to spread ideas contrary to the doctrine of equality!' He then noticed a little red ribbon which the Dauphin had tied to the claw of his favourite bird, to distinguish him from the others. 'Ha!' he said, 'and what is this favour? It is a mark of distinction which Republicans cannot allow.' It is such stories that have made historians doubt the value of the evidence of the old servants of the Monarchy.

Soon after this the billiard-table was taken away by order of the Council. One day a friendly Commissioner had come into the room with Gagnié, to find it crowded with those who were off duty. They had all been drinking heavily, and were amusing themselves at the expense of the Dauphin, blowing tobacco-smoke into his face, tossing him from one to another, and knocking him about, until he cried out. Next day Gagnié and Bazenery went into the Council-room and related to the new Commis-

sioners all that they had seen on the previous day, and demanded that the game of billiards should not be allowed any longer. The table was taken away. Nobody was more annoyed than Simon. By now he was not even allowed to get a breath of air unless he was accompanied by a Commissioner, and his application to attend a fête in Paris was refused. With no exercise and no occupation, he took to his bottle, blaming all his misfortunes on the little prisoner, and feeling that he himself was nothing more than a prisoner. He returned to his old bullying methods. Meanwhile his wife, who continued to wash and dress the boy, began to suffer from a complaint of the liver brought on by lack of exercise and air and by excessive drinking. She herself admitted, years afterwards, to the Police of Louis XVIII, during a cross-examination, that at this period she struck the child, but that it was the only occasion on which she did so. This is probably true. She seems to have been, on the whole, of a kindly nature, and to have won the gratitude of the boy. The nuns who afterwards nursed her in the Hospital for Incurables said that she had a gentle disposition, and the one who knew her best said of her that she was '*Douce et bonne par caractère.*' Making allowance for the life she had to lead in the Temple, there is no reason to doubt what was said of her.

Since this woman's health gave cause for anxiety during the winter of '93, a doctor, Naudin, was called in. One day he saw Simon and one or two Commissioners trying to make Louis-Charles sing an obscene song. When he refused, Simon lost his temper, pulled his hair, and shouted that he had a mind to kill him. Naudin

intervened and reprimanded Simon and his comrades, who passed it off as a laughing matter. Next day the Dauphin offered the doctor two pears, and thanked him for his action. This Naudin took the opportunity, during his visits, to treat Louis-Charles for another attack of worms, and quickly cured him. But his general health had by this time got beyond any cure that could be hoped for in a prison. Mme. Royale had heard, as long ago as August, that he had grown fat. By the end of the winter he had begun to develop a rounding of the shoulders and a lengthening of the limbs—two symptoms of tuberculosis, the disease which had carried off his elder brother. But throughout the winter the Commune was obsessed with the idea of an attempted escape, and issued orders relative to the arming of the guards and the closer guarding of the prison gates, the keys of which were to be left with the Council. A Commissioner reported that shutters had been removed from some of the windows, and that consequently a man standing outside could make signs to the Dauphin. The shutters were at once put back.

As the year drew to a close Simon evidently fell more and more out of favour. Perhaps his masters at the Commune feared a recurrence of that short period when he had seemed to take pity on his prisoner and believed that he might end by getting caught in some plot to effect a rescue. Perhaps they feared that he would betray the machinations which had made the Dauphin his mother's accuser. At any rate he became disgruntled and uneasy. His wife's health was, of course, an additional source of anxiety. On January 3 of the new year, at a sitting of the General Council of the Commune, of which he was a

member, remarks were made by Pache the mayor on the absence of various members, and Chaumette elaborated them into a demand that no member of the Council should be allowed to hold any position which necessitated his absence from the sessions of the Council. This was followed by a decree that anybody so placed must choose between his two positions, and Coru hastened to sacrifice his well-paid post at the Temple to his republican faith. Simon, also in a well-paid post, was at once put in an embarrassing position. Distasteful though his work had become, he yet knew that never again could he hope to earn so much money, or to fill such a responsible position. We may imagine that his wife influenced his decision, pleading her health. At any rate on January 5 he attended the Council and announced that he would give up his guardianship of the Dauphin, preferring to fulfil the duties to which the electors had called him. His resignation was accepted. On January 8 the Council asked the Committee of Public Safety for their opinion on the appointment of a successor to Simon, and the Committee replied that it regarded Simon's task as valueless, and considered that in future the prisoners should be guarded exclusively by members of the Council. In other words, the Committee, which was the executive power in France, had no time to bother about the prisoners, and cared nothing for what should happen to them, provided they did not escape.

On Sunday, January 19, a day of thaw and warm mist, Mme. Royale and Mme. Elizabeth heard much noise on the floor below, and, looking through a hole in a shutter, saw packages being carried out into the courtyard. They

concluded that the Dauphin was being taken away. That night Simon and his wife left the Temple. There is no account of those last hours. All that we know is that they went away, taking with them a certificate, stating that the prisoner had been shown to the four Commissioners on duty at the time, and was in good health. The certificate, of which so much is made by those who support the theory of an escape, was worthless. There was no medical examination, and the four men were shown the child as a mere formality, and by torch-light. And if he was in good health at this time, why was it necessary to substitute for him an ailing child?

Simon and his wife departed, and the boy was left alone—unless one of the Commissioners took pity on him and watched over him for the remainder of the night. Two days later, on January 21, the anniversary of his father's death, Louis-Charles, whom many called their King, was immured in the room which had been Cléry's, on the second floor. In that room, converted into a cell, the door nailed up and plated with iron, the sick child remained alone for more than six months. His food was pushed through a little barred guichet in the lower half of the door. The top part of the door was also barred, leaving a grille through which the Commissioners could peer, to attest his presence. Nobody spoke to him. He was without fire, and without light, save what filtered in from the shuttered window.



## CHAPTER VI

### LOUIS-CHARLES ALONE ; THE VISIT OF BARRAS

DURING the seventeen months which the Dauphin had spent in the Temple when Simon resigned his duties the Revolution had challenged Europe, had been momentarily successful, and had then seen the young Republic attacked, its outposts driven in, its frontier fortresses beleaguered and forced to surrender, and its capital placed in mortal peril. That young impulse of untried volunteers had spent itself, and had broken against a duller, a slower, but a veteran and a well-organised thing. Danton and Carnot, who knew that enthusiasm is a horse which needs a strong rider, set to work to control that enthusiasm. As the retreat of the French continued, the internal situation also grew desperate. There were risings all over the country. It was Danton who realised that at such a moment only military dictatorship could save France, and the instrument he created and inspired was the Committee of Public Safety, the executive power which, by employing martial law of the most ferocious kind at home, permitted Carnot to raise, equip, drill and feed the fourteen armies of the Republic. The irresistible charge which turned the line at Wattignies gave the Coalition a glimpse of what was to come. They were no longer dealing with ungoverned exaltation. Carnot had tried

his new weapon, and had shown his young soldiers of what they were capable. But Wattignies merely meant a breathing space. It meant that Maubeuge was saved, and that the invasion was temporarily checked. Morally it meant far more.

By the end of 1793 the situation of the Republic, internal as well as external, was completely changed. Hoche had driven Wurmser and his Prussians from the lines of Weissembourg. Landau was relieved, Mayence recaptured by Pichegru. Savenay marked the smashing of the rebellion in the Vendée. Toulon was recaptured by Bonaparte. Kellerman drove back the Piedmontese. But these successes of the armies precipitated the crisis which ended in the death of Danton. It was he himself who had preached untiringly the necessity for the most vigorous measures to deal with the counter-revolutionaries, had been responsible for the Revolutionary Tribunal, and had realised that the Terror was essential, as martial law is always essential when there is a rebellion. But there was no personal ambition in what he did. The Terror had been a means which he intended to use in a moment of acute peril. With the recapture of the offensive by Carnot's armies, and the almost daily news of victories, the Terror was no longer essential. And Danton was among the first to grasp this, and to put into words what the majority of ordinary citizens were saying in their own homes. For his purpose he used Desmoulins, and the first months of 1794 are filled with the campaign in the 'Vieux Cordelier,' at the end of which the cold hostility of Robespierre and his repulsive fanaticism were to triumph.

This, then, is the background of the months which the Dauphin spent in isolation. It is as though all had forgotten his existence. Almost within earshot are the voices of those who appeal to the Committee to be merciful, since, now that the immediate danger is past, it can well afford to use moderation. It apparently occurs to nobody to think of the prisoners in the Temple. Their names are not mentioned in debate—not even in the sessions of the Commune. In all this talk of clemency they are ignored. Hébert, perhaps the most villainous character of the Revolution, goes to his death before he can make more mischief, in March. Danton follows him in April. In May comes Tourcoing, the prelude to Fleurus, and in June, Fleurus itself, which decides everything, and begins the story of the twenty most astonishing years in the history of warfare. But Robespierre, growing daily in power, continues the Terror even now, still talking of virtue. And there remains in the Temple the boy who, by no stretch of imagination, can be called guilty of anything but being the son of his father and mother. From January 21 until July 28, in the morning after the fall of Robespierre, nobody but the prison officials and the Commissioners on duty sees the boy.

What happened during those six months can never be known in any detail. It is possible only to reconstruct the outline of the story from tradition and from probability. The rare fragments of direct evidence, such as the account given by Gagnié to Simien-Despréaux and the few sentences of Mme. Royale become at once suspect to all who adopt the theory of an escape. They ask, with singular innocence, how anybody could possibly have been

cruel enough to condemn a little child to solitary confinement. They forget Hébert and Carrier and Fouché, and the things that were done in the provinces, and they ignore the obvious reasons for such an abominable act. From motives of economy no successor to Simon was appointed. From political motives it was determined to end for ever the possibility of a rescue. These two things together explain the precautions taken. But those who favour the romantic story ignore also the fact that it would have been no less cruel to substitute a child for the Dauphin—a child who could not even be said to be a victim of his parents' misdeeds. That his aunt and his sister no longer heard him singing is adduced as a proof that a dumb child had been substituted for him !

The early writers left nothing to the imagination in their description of the Dauphin's solitary confinement, and it was their wealth of detail, much of it probably true, but hardly any of it susceptible to proof, which caused the obvious reaction—a reaction capable of producing such ludicrous special pleading as that of Provins—but also such masterly special pleading as that of Lenotre. The latter says that no trace of any order to nail up the door, given by any authority, has been discovered, and that no mention has ever been made of such an order. But, as he himself adds, Hébert and Chaumette were not the men to wait for an order ; and they were at the Temple immediately after Simon's departure. If it be objected to this that both Hébert and Chaumette were suspected of being bought by a royalist lady, and that it was Couthon's denunciation of the former on this count that sent him to his death, the reply is that the anxiety of Hébert to be

able to produce the Dauphin at the critical moment would explain the close guard kept over him, and the absence of any written order from the Commune. The six months in question coincide with the worst excesses of the Terror. Robespierre himself visited Mme. Royale in May 1794, and she wrote on a piece of paper a demand that a doctor should be sent to examine her brother. No attention was paid to this demand. Mme. Royale knew the truth about her brother from those who took his meals to him, and from Baron the turnkey. She even tried to enlist the sympathy of one of the guards on behalf of her brother, with the result that the man was immediately dismissed. Neither Caron nor Gourlet nor Baron had any motive for exaggerating the boy's sufferings to his sister, or for concealing the fact that it was not her brother who was in the room below her. A member of the General Council of the Commune, Crescend, was expelled from the Council for expressing pity for the prisoner. Others who might have protested were prevented either by fear of the consequences, or by the knowledge that they might still be of service to the Dauphin one day, if they held their tongues and kept their positions.

The room to which Louis-Charles was confined after Simon and his wife had gone was that which had been Cléry's bedroom, next to the dining-room in which Louis XVI had taken leave of his family on the evening before his death. A piece was cut out of the top part of the door, and a grille inserted. The bottom half was reinforced with plates of iron, and a little wicket was made through which food could be inserted. The window was barred with iron, and outside it was fixed a shutter, with

a gap at the top. For warmth, there was a pipe which passed outside the door, and was connected with a stove in the antechamber. For light, there was whatever of gloomy half-light could penetrate by the grille, or by the gap in the shutter. No lamp or candle was allowed him after dusk, so that the hours of night, which he feared, were spent in complete darkness. The chamber itself was spacious, and there was ample room for his bed, his table and chair, and for a kind of cradle in which, when he grew ill, he was more comfortable than upon the bed. Outside the room was a corridor leading to a closet in the southern tower. Nobody has said that the entrance to this corridor was walled up, and there is no evidence that he was not allowed to use it. It is common sense that he must have used it, and so the contention that he was literally immured in a cell falls to the ground.

Now it will be appreciated at once that, given the setting and the prisoner, there never was a stronger temptation to royalists to allow their imagination a loose rein, and many writers have described that dark solitude as though they had been beside the victim. Yet the testimony of the earliest chroniclers can only be ignored by men stupid enough to despise tradition, and content to say that because there are no documents, we can know nothing of what occurred. It stands to reason that Commissioners who were afraid to talk about their task at the time would not have hesitated to talk about it later on, to their friends and relatives, in drink-shops and eating-houses. And because the six months have been described rhetorically, that is no reason to doubt the facts which produced the rhetoric. And the principal fact is that a

nervous boy of eight and a half years was suddenly deprived of human society, and shut up in a cold, dark room, and kept there alone, without exercise or care of any sort, for six months. His contact with the world was confined to a glimpse of the man, Caron or another, who brought him his meals, and perhaps risked a word through the little wicket; and to the visits of the Commissioners, who merely glanced through the grille to certify his presence. He had no toys to play with, no books to read, and could not look out of his window. There was nothing but the arrival of a meal or the appearance of a Commissioner on his rounds to break the monotony of his day. And at night he would be awakened by the bolts being drawn back in the door of the antechamber, and a light would be held up to the grille by the Commissioner on duty. He had to make his own bed, sweep his room and look after his clothes. When he began to grow ill, as any child would have done in such conditions, he ceased to care about such things, and neglected both the room and himself. As his sister has recorded—and she knew what was going on through Caron, Gagnié, and one or two others who were as friendly to her as they dared to be—he was too frightened to complain to the Commissioners, or to ask for anything. He grew weaker, no longer washed himself, and spent long hours crouched on his bed, or trying to kill the bugs and lice which infested the place. Believing his mother to be still alive, he did not ask for her, or for his aunt or sister. And he knew nothing of the scene on May 9 when his aunt was taken to the Conciergerie and questioned, nor of her noble death on the next day.

On May 11 there came to the room where Mme. Royale

sat disconsolately, not knowing what had become of her aunt, a man whom all treated with profound respect. He stared insolently at her, fingered her books, but said nothing to her. Before leaving the room he whispered with one of the Commissioners. It was Robespierre, paying a secret visit. Mme. Royale, without addressing him, handed him a piece of paper on which she had written, 'My brother is ill. I have written to the Convention to obtain medical attention for him. The Convention has not replied. I reiterate my request.' Though there is no account of a visit to the Dauphin, it is reasonable to assume that Robespierre looked through the grille, into that room which by now was in a state of filth beyond description, to make sure that the prisoner was still there. However that may be, there was no answer to the request of Mme. Royale. Nor was any report made of the condition of the boy. But, somehow or other, the news of his illness came to the ears of an old doctor who lived at Montreuil, and had known the Dauphin at Versailles. With considerable courage this doctor, Lemonnier, tried to obtain permission to visit the prisoner for the purpose of giving him medical attention. Permission was, of course, refused.

The Dauphin's legs and arms, I have said, had begun to grow disproportionately long, and his shoulders were rounded. Though he had a torturing skin-disease, and tumours, he was still left alone in that verminous, stenching room. He was too weak to drag himself along the corridor, and his spirit was so crushed that it was difficult for the man who brought his food to rouse him out of his lethargy. Gagnié gave Simien-Despréaux a description





DONNE PAR

ABETH

A LA COMTESSE DE CLERMONT-TONNERRE  
DAME DU PALAIS DE S.M. LA REINE.

of the boy which is too horrible to print. Caron had to shout at him to draw his attention to a plate or a jug. His clothes were in rags, and the swellings on his knees made it extremely painful for him to wear his breeches, or to pull them off if he had once got them on. As the heat of the summer increased, the atmosphere of putrefaction became more terrible, he lost his appetite, and the disease from which he died—tuberculosis—got a firm hold of him.

He would have died much sooner, but for events which were happening in Paris. On July 27 the conspiracy of Thermidor brought about the fall of Robespierre, and Barère, in the Convention, told his strange story of the tyrant's plot to place the Dauphin on the throne and marry his sister—a story that was bound to increase the rumours of an escape which had been heard here and there for some time. The silence of the authorities on the subject of the Dauphin, and the mysterious solitary confinement had started these rumours, and there must have been many small tradesmen and friends of the officials who came away from the Temple saying that the prisoner whom nobody saw any longer might well be a substitute. Barras, the victor of Thermidor, determined to look into the matter, and he wasted no time. He arrived at the Temple in his military uniform hot from his march on the Town Hall, and the success of the conspiracy. Mme. Royale heard the noise of his arrival; drums beating, the calling out of the guard, words of command, doors opening and shutting; and, finally, the bolts drawn on the floor below.

Barras saw before him, in a room indescribably dirty, neither the door nor the window of which had been

opened for six months, the child whom he had seen at the Tuileries not many years before. This child was now lying curled up on the cradle-bed in the middle of the room. There was a mattress, but no coverings. When Barras entered the room, and stood still in surprise, the boy made no movement. At first Barras thought he was asleep, but soon noticed that his eyes were wide open. He asked him why he preferred the cradle, which was too small for him, to the bed. Louis-Charles answered, 'I prefer this cradle to the big bed. I have no complaints to make about those who are guarding me.' And he looked first at Barras, and then at the officials. Barras replied that he, for his part, had severe complaints to make about the disgusting state of the room. Then he asked Louis-Charles if he was ill, and in what part of his body his sufferings were, and the boy pointed silently to his head and his knees. Barras asked him to stand up, without result. Two of those who were there helped him to rise, but it was evident that he did not want to make any effort, and the moment they had him on his feet, he threw himself down again. Again they tried, supporting him under the arms, but he appeared to suffer such pain when he began to walk that they helped him to sit down again. They noticed that his breeches were very tight, and Barras had them slit up the sides as far as the knee. This revealed very large swellings of a livid hue. He learnt also that the Dauphin ate hardly anything and slept very little.

Barras then went up to the room of Mme. Royale, who had dressed herself hastily on hearing the noise below, and questioned her. She, too, had been alone since her aunt's death, and was so overwhelmed at this visit that

she could not answer when addressed. Barras then gave orders that the two children should be allowed to take exercise in the garden together, and made his report to the Committee of Public Safety. He recommended that the Dauphin should be examined by doctors and that a friend of his own, Laurent, should be appointed to look after the Dauphin. He further suggested that two women should be sent to nurse him and keep his room clean. His orders and his recommendations were ignored, save in the matter of the appointment of Laurent, which took place the evening after this visit. For though, with the disappearance of Robespierre, there was a swift reaction against the Terror, and talk of more humane methods of government, the Committees were in no mood to risk an accusation of lukewarmness, particularly as the visit of Barras to the Temple had roused royalist hopes of better treatment for the prisoners.

This Laurent who stepped into the post of guardian of the Dauphin was a very different man from Simon; an educated Creole from Martinique, aged twenty-four, with pleasant manners. He was a convinced Republican, and, under the Terror, an extremist; and though he was of a somewhat gentle disposition, he never allowed his heart to override his convictions. His affability, and a certain deference, made a strong impression on Mme. Royale, but if he was moved by the condition of the Dauphin, he never ceased to carry out his duties almost to the letter, as his official correspondence proves. The fact that he was a Creole, like Joséphine, and a friend of Barras, has, of course, been used as the flimsy foundation of one of the many stories of an escape. The question to be asked is

whether a man of sensibility who did not even dare to clean up the Dauphin's room on his own initiative would have been likely to risk his neck by becoming mixed up in a conspiracy. Another pertinent question is whether, if he was to be the agent of escape, he would have written repeatedly to the Committees, asking for a colleague, or even two, to be appointed, since he found the responsibility too heavy for a single guardian. As for the three letters which play so large a part in this particular theory of the escape, they are forgeries.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as he had seen his prisoner, Laurent made a report to the Committee of General Security, and demanded an enquiry, so that the condition in which the child had been handed over to him might be established officially. The Committee at once sent representatives, who ordered that the prisoner should be treated less rigorously. Even so, nothing was done for a month. I can think of no explanation for this. Everybody in the Temple knew the truth, which was that the boy was gravely ill, and that his sufferings were intensified by lack of medical attention and by the putrefaction all round him, which increased as the summer wore on. Three times a day Laurent visited Mme. Royale, asked her if she required anything, and apparently told her that her brother's torture was over, and that he was being cared for. Yet for four weeks her brother was left in filth and loneliness, in spite of the orders of Barras, the protector of Laurent, and of the deputation from the Committee; in spite of

<sup>1</sup> The text of the three letters, and a full and detailed discussion of them, will be found in the second volume of GUSTAVE BORD's *Autour du Temple* (Emile-Paul, 1912).

the complaints of the newly appointed steward of the Temple, Liénard, who said that the room should be entered and cleansed at once. The Commissioners on duty replied that the matter must be referred to the General Council, that a formal order must be given. But why had not Barras issued a written order, or why had he not taken the trouble to find out whether his verbal order had been obeyed? We can gauge the extent of the fear of appearing lukewarm by considering this astonishing state of affairs. Not one man there, nor even a group of men, could be found to show the slightest mercy to the prisoner, to undertake the responsibility even of washing him, opening his windows, dressing his sores, smuggling in a doctor. Chantelauze talks of the laziness of Creoles, but Laurent, even if lazy, was not without compassion. Admittedly the task of disinfecting the room was a revolting one, but that is no explanation. The only explanation is that verbal orders were given to Laurent. He must have been told that though he might be friendly to Mme. Royale, nothing must be changed with regard to the treatment of the boy. The extremists must not be allowed to say that the reaction after Thermidor was inclining people towards injudicious clemency. The Dauphin, after all, was still a symbol, a flag, a rallying-point for all who had sworn to destroy the Republic.

In the morning of the last day of August there was a panic in Paris. The earth rocked, windows were smashed, and the sky was darkened by flying fragments of wood and stone. Many remembered the prophecies of the mad old visionary Catherine Théot, who called herself the Mother

of God, and the gaolers in the prison where she lay repeated one of her sayings: 'I shall not die on the scaffold, as you hope. An occurrence which will throw Paris into a panic will announce my death.' Sure enough, the old woman had died at the moment of the earthquake, so they laid her out on a bed and lit candles and awaited her resurrection—until it was known that the earthquake was the explosion of the powder-magazine at Grenelle, which awoke Mme. Royale in the Temple, as she notes in her Memoirs. As soon as the truth was known, a rumour filled the streets that the explosion was the work of the aristocrats, who had broken out of prison. Many hundreds of people had been killed in the accident, and the Convention, as nervous as the public, immediately sent two representatives to the Temple, to certify that the Dauphin was still under lock and key, and to take precautions against any possibility of escape in the future. The guard was doubled. But Laurent took the opportunity to draw attention to the pitiful condition of his prisoner, and as soon as they had given permission for the cell to be opened and the boy tended, he wrote out a report to the Committee of General Security, telling them that he intended to begin the work on the next day, with two reliable helpers.

And so, on the first day of September, Laurent, Liénard and Gagnié entered the room where Louis-Charles had been shut up for nearly eight months. Once, for a few hours, the door had been unsealed to admit Barras. Now, when it was too late, a new life was to begin for him. When the three men entered they found him lying on his bed. He was wasted with disease. covered with vermin

and with his long nails and long matted hair seemed hardly human. An untasted meal was on his small table, and Gagnié asked him, gently, why he had not eaten his food. To which the child answered that he wanted to die. He was moved temporarily into what had been his father's bedroom, where a bed from the floor above was set up. A doctor attended him, and his sores were bathed and dressed. Fresh linen was brought for him and new clothes, his hair was cut, and he lay in a bath of warm water. Meanwhile Cléry's old room was scrubbed and purified, part of the shuttering was removed and the window was thrown open. The old door of Simon's day was replaced, and there was light and fresh air in the place once more.

No doubt the boy had despaired of ever receiving a friendly word again, and had resigned himself to his long agony in surroundings too dreadful to be described in any detail. When at last he was to feel, though to a very slight degree, the effects of what had happened outside his prison, his life was doomed. Nothing more was possible than to spare him, in his last days, the monstrous treatment he had hitherto received. Had he been older, and allowed to hear news of the world outside his walls, he might have hoped that the cause of royalty was not yet completely lost. At Robespierre's death an audible sigh of relief had gone up, and it was followed quickly by an unreasonable outburst of almost careless joy. Those who supported the Revolution saw the armies victorious and the Revolutionary idea established, and determined that the need for an extreme rigour such as had brought the Terror into being was past. Side by side with the rejoicing



went a dangerous anger against the remnant of the extreme Jacobins, and a determination that a strong government need not, henceforth, be a merciless government. The extremists themselves saw which way the tide was setting, and knew that though it was they who had got rid of Robespierre, most men had no illusions about them, and had not forgotten their past. Well might the butcher Legendre cry, 'A people that has made a Revolution should never look back'—a most convenient doctrine for men like Legendre. Cleverer and wilier scoundrels, such as the contemptible Tallien, seeing that mildness and moderation were to be the rage, turned against the Jacobins; and Tallien himself, with the equally contemptible Fréron, led the campaign which his wife, the harlot Thérèzia Cabarrus, directed, in the intervals between one debauch and another, against his old colleagues.

The new feverish gaiety which every historian has remarked in the Paris of the months after Thermidor had nothing to do with solid happiness. It was thankfulness for relief from an intolerable strain—but nobody knew what was coming next. The peasants, thanks to the more just distribution of property, were contented, but the urban crowds were half-starved. Had the royalists not been foolish enough to talk of punishment, and to give people the idea that if they returned it would be as avengers, they might have made more of their chance. For those who were now playing at moderation, while secretly plotting the destruction of their old friends, were capable of any change of loyalty, so long as they could bury their vile past. Barras, Tallien, Fréron and a score

more were anybody's for the asking, cash down. M. Madelin<sup>1</sup> mentions that the common people of Paris, waiting in a queue for bread, spoke of the 'little one' in the Temple, and called him Louis XVII. But what they meant by a monarchy, was a monarchy that had taken its lessons to heart, not a return of the absolute monarchy of the old régime. And the man who did more than any other to prevent a willingness to revert to a monarchy from becoming a strong desire for a King was the lymphatic fool Provence, who could not open his mouth without uttering criminally stupid words. His absurd brother Artois ran him close.

What decided matters was the army, which was republican to the core. But at the end of 1794 there were those, even among the soldiers, who would not have said a word against a constitutional monarchy, particularly in the person of a boy of nine, in whose name would have acted some Council of Regency composed of tried and tested republicans of the more moderate stamp. But he, in his prison, knew nothing of the hopes of his supporters or the fears of his opponents. From time to time there were rumours of his death, and those of his loyal friends who knew best what had happened in the eight months of his solitude must have realised that if ever he emerged from captivity it would be as an incurable invalid, broken in mind and body. Yet many of the more intelligent among them saw in him the last hope for their cause—and no wonder. Large numbers of simple people who had wanted a revolution, but a revolution led by the King—since monarchy was in their blood—could be

<sup>1</sup> *La Contre-Révolution sous la Révolution* (Plon, 1935).

persuaded without difficulty to support the just claim of a child whose charm was already a legend and whose sufferings endeared him still more to them. Some of the nobility dreamed only of a monarchy shorn of privilege and pledged to carry out the new ideas and stand by the reforms already introduced. Others, more sanguine, thought that all could be won back slowly from a loving and trusting people. But both parties feared the ranting methods of the *émigrés*, who had been too long beyond the frontiers to read the purpose of the men who had made the Republic. Provence and Artois and their effete crowd of babblers had carried the old régime with them into the cities and camps from which they issued their foolish threats. They were living in the old days, and nothing had changed in their minds. They had no conception of the thing that was to transform Europe, and they are far less to be pitied than the returned noblemen and released prisoners who, though equally ignorant of the impulse that drove the armies, at least paid the Republic the compliment of believing its utterances sincere, and were at least sane enough not to promise revenge in the name of the dying Louis-Charles.

## CHAPTER VII

### AFTER THERMIDOR ; THE REPORT OF HARMAND

I HAVE said that the failure of Laurent to carry out the orders of Barras without delay is inexplicable. Others, however, have found a ready explanation. Laurent, they say, knew, the moment he saw the prisoner, that he was not the Dauphin, and the only way to hush up this remarkable discovery was to keep the boy locked up. Any critic, coming across such a story even in a novel, would say, ' But a month later Laurent himself asked to be authorised to do what should have been done at once. What occurred during that month to make it unnecessary to keep the important secret any longer ? '

From September 1 much was done to alleviate the sufferings of Louis-Charles. A doctor attended him regularly. He had baths, and those who were friendly towards him, men like Baron and Gourlet the turnkeys, helped him to dress, kept his room clean, and, though always in the presence of a Commissioner, talked with him. He was given toys, pencils and paper, playing cards. Laurent visited him frequently during the day, and killed the rats that still disturbed his night with some arsenic brought by the doctor. One piece of unreasonable cruelty, however, was still continued. He was left alone at night, in the darkness, no lights being allowed him.

It took him some time to accustom himself to the kinder treatment which came too late to save his life. He not unnaturally suspected that any mitigation of the ill-treatment he had undergone was merely an interval and that worse was to follow. His response to a friendly word or a thoughtful action was not as swift as it had been, and those who were only too eager to help him had a difficult task. His long periods of silence, and the frightened look which was often his only answer to the most straightforward question led to the invention of the preposterous story that a dumb child had been substituted for him. Paris had frequently been filled with rumours of an escape and a substitution, but it occurred to the more thoughtful that the substituted child would most certainly have protested that he was not the Dauphin, rather than remain in prison. The visit of Harmand, which will be described presently, provided an admirable solution to the mystery. This child spoke no word, answered no questions. Obviously he was dumb. But since there was evidence that the child who was dumb in the presence of Harmand, spoke on numerous occasions, there must have been a second substitution. And so on. To meet this certain historians have fabricated a vow taken by the Dauphin not to speak any more after the witness he had borne against his mother, shame having driven him to a brooding melancholy. There is not the slightest need to suppose any such unlikely thing. An ailing child, first bullied and coarsened, and then locked up alone for nearly eight months, is not likely to find conversation easy, especially in the matter of being questioned by officials. Not understanding what he had said of his mother, he had had plenty

of time to connect the examination with his subsequent misfortunes. And since he saw none but officials, and was by now really ill, what has been called his taciturnity is not surprising.

Laurent obtained permission to take the boy to the top of the Tower for a breath of air each day, but a Commissioner was always present, and the guardian's attitude was probably more severe than he wished it to be. For the point to seize in this story of inhuman cruelty is that even now, even after Thermidor, everybody was afraid of compromising himself. On an occasion when the prisoners were referred to in the Convention in connexion with an insurrection in the name of Louis XVII, a deputy hinted pretty broadly that it was time to send the cause of the trouble into perpetual exile, and there were those who would not have hesitated to suggest that he should be done away with. If such things could be thought and said in the Convention, even the most convinced republicans had to be wary of their decenter instincts. Hue, the faithful servant of Louis XVI, had the courage to ask that he might be imprisoned again, in order to look after the Dauphin. Nothing came of the suggestion.

De Beauchesne tells a story of this period which may very well be true. The Dauphin, standing one day at the top of the Tower, saw a few small flowers growing in the chinks of the masonry. He plucked them, and on descending to his own room, dropped them outside the door of the room in the third storey where he thought his mother was still imprisoned; remembering how he had brought her flowers from his garden at the Tuileries.

As summer faded into autumn the health of the Dauphin, which had benefited from the change in his treatment, grew worse once more, and his friends outside realised that if he was to be rescued it would have to be within the next few months. The daring and chivalrous spirits who had planned so many escapes for the royal family had always known that however carefully they laid their schemes, and however minutely each detail was studied and every obstacle provided for, yet there must be an element of sheer luck to aid them. The escape of a sick boy presented no less difficulty. The tales, told by the pretenders, of baskets and cardboard boxes and bundles of linen are ridiculous because anything capable of containing the body of a small boy would have been examined with care. A straightforward escape was out of the question. D'Andigné, in his memoirs, described the feeling of helplessness which, at this time, affected those royalists who were determined to rescue the Dauphin. D'Andigné made the most exhaustive study of the whole question, and examined every possibility, and his conclusion was that to succeed in the attempt, a man would need to be master of Paris. Nevertheless, and although an ever stricter watch was kept on the prisoner, the wildest rumours were current, and there is no doubt that here, there and everywhere the escape was a topic of conversation, and in October the authorities became genuinely alarmed. There was a talk of a plot involving Pitt and the exiled French Princes to proclaim Louis XVII King, talk of mysterious agents in the capitals of Europe, talk of intrigues involving the Committees, and, as ever, many said that the Dauphin had already escaped and would be

proclaimed King and crowned at the opportune moment. There was a loud echo of all this excitement in the Convention towards the end of October. The question of the reinstatement of the remnant of the proscribed Girondins came up for discussion, and it was pointed out that one of them had talked openly of putting the Dauphin on the throne. A secret document was mentioned, a mysterious cupboard. Cambon said he had known of this plot. A week later, the Committee of General Security was uneasy enough in its mind to send two deputies to the Temple to certify the presence of the two prisoners. Presumably they chose two men who would recognise the Dauphin. One of them, Goupilleau, had seen him two months before. And if that be granted, the whole theory of the substitution falls to the ground, unless its sponsors are prepared to claim that the Committee was in the secret to a man. The two chosen were Reverchon and Goupilleau, and all we know of their visit, on the night of October 28, is what Mme. Royale tells us. 'At the end of October, one night when I was asleep, at one in the morning, my door was opened. I rose and opened my door. [Presumably the door of the inner room.] Two men from the Committee came in with Laurent. They looked at me, and went out again without saying a word.'

As a result of this visit, which shows how popular rumour had worked on the nerves of the Committee, certain precautions were taken to prevent the slightest chance of a successful escape. From that day the Committees of the forty-eight sections were to send, each in turn, one of their number for guard-duty. Each would be



relieved after twenty-four hours, but no member could serve more than once a year. Further, Laurent's repeated demands for a colleague were to be met at last, and a citizen of fixed and proved republican principles was to join him in the Temple, and to share his duties. Lenotre, who adopts the theory of a substitution, makes a great mystery of the midnight visit and the new regulations. But if we take the common-sense view rather than the picturesque, the whole affair explains itself.

Laurent's colleague, who arrived on the night of November 8, was Gomin, thirty-eight years of age, son of a Parisian upholsterer. He was a quiet, simple little man, extremely afraid of getting himself into trouble. Neither he nor anyone else knew why he had been chosen for this post, but years afterwards he told Beauchesne that he had discovered, long after his appointment, that the Committee of General Security had received a recommendation from a Marquis living in Paris, and had acted on it. This Marquis probably knew that the unassuming Gomin would not be likely to terrify the prisoner, and would be as kind as possible to him. According to Mme. Royale, Gomin was so horrified when he saw the boy that he wanted to resign at once. Mme. de Tourzel, on the other hand, says that at first Gomin did not realise how ill his charge was, being deceived by the colour in his cheeks (the usual accompaniment of a tubercular disease). But the new guardian did not resign, and remained at the Temple until the end of the tragedy. He lived on until 1841, and Beauchesne knew him in his old age. His contradictory statements may, I think, be attributed to failing memory and to fear of saying what he

ought not to say, rather than to villainy. A very timid man often gives an impression of lying, and if he is over-anxious about the effect of what he is saying, will frequently contradict himself.

Gomin had been in command of a battalion of the National Guard which had done its turn of duty at the Tuileries, in the days when the Dauphin used to play in his garden. He had seen the boy several times, and now recognised him, in spite of the marasmus which had begun to waste his body. But the Committee had guarded against the possibility of Laurent and Gomin becoming mixed up in any conspiracy, towards which their sympathy for the prisoner might have led them. Neither of them knew from one twenty-four hours to the next, who would be the Commissioner appointed to watch not only the Dauphin but his guardians. And the fact that the same man did not come twice put an end to any chance of winning supporters for a desperate attempt. Not that Gomin was the man to get himself into any such situation. But from the moment when he joined Laurent he did his best, in his hesitant way, to win the confidence of the Dauphin. Knowing his love of flowers, he gave him some in little pots. He also did what Laurent could have done long ago—brought the boy a lamp, to spare him the terrors of the long hours of darkness. The quality of his food was improved, after a Commissioner had commented strongly on its inadequacy. The same Commissioner having reported that the Dauphin was not getting enough air, Gomin was emboldened to demand that he should be allowed to walk in the garden—which was only what Barras had ordered months before. The request was

refused, probably because the *Courrier Universel*, a royalist paper, had been talking rather too loudly about changes which had been made at the Temple. The article attracted so much attention that Mathieu of the Committee of General Security referred to it at the Convention, and assured the deputies that the Committee regarded the Dauphin as they regarded any other prisoner, and that there was not the slightest intention of treating him any better than he had been treated before Thermidor.

Encouraged, however, by the not unfriendly attitude of the Commissioners, Gomin did succeed in varying the monotony of the prisoner's existence. He took him down to a room on the floor below, and spent as much time with him as possible. Up to then Louis-Charles had not spoken to the new guardian, partly through his distrust of all officials, especially when they were strangers to him, and partly, no doubt, because of something in the man's manner which he took to be insincerity, but was really nervousness. 'You are the man,' he said to Gomin, 'who gave me the flowers. I haven't forgotten that.' But it was difficult to amuse the boy, who was now suffering intermittently from attacks of fever. His tumours still pained him, and he had to be persuaded to make an effort to walk when he was taken to the top of the Tower. He liked best to sit in silence by the fire in the room below his own. The gravity of his illness was becoming common talk, and the Committee decided to send three of its members to make a complete investigation of affairs at the Temple, and to report to them particularly on the health of the Dauphin. The three members chosen for the task were Harmand, who had seen the prisoner at the

Temple before the execution of Louis XVI, Reverchon, who had seen him on the night of October 28, and Mathieu; and their famous visit, which has been the centre of so much controversy, was made on December 19, 1794 (not, as Harmand said, writing in 1814, in February 1795). Harmand, the leader, was a vain careerist, who cared only for his own advancement, and served anybody who would reward him. He died of starvation in 1816. Reverchon had been a regicide and a follower of Robespierre; a terrorist (particularly in Lyons) during the Terror, but a moderate after Thermidor. Mathieu, another regicide, was another extremist who changed his tune after Thermidor; a violent, vulgar fellow.

In reading Harmand's account of what happened on December 19, 1794, we must remember that his book appeared in 1814, and was written for the royalist public. There is no need to believe his dramatisation of his emotions, which were probably not very profound. But his description of what he saw is the text for the whole legend of the deaf and dumb child who had been substituted for the Dauphin.

The oak door at the head of the stairs was unlocked, and the three men found themselves in the anteroom, bare of all furniture save for the china stove which was supposed to warm the prisoner in his room. The Commissioners who accompanied the deputation drew attention to the fact that, by this precaution, the prisoner could not get at the fire! They went through the anteroom, and the door of the prisoner's room was unlocked. Louis-Charles was sitting at a square table, building

castles with a pack of playing-cards. He was wearing a new slate-coloured sailor-coat, and the room was bright and clean. There was a wooden bed, without curtains, covered with good linen sheets, and at its feet a second bed, but with nothing on it; the Commissioners told them it had been Simon's. When the deputation came into the room, Louis-Charles continued his game, and as they advanced nearer to him, he took no notice of them at all. Harmand then addressed him, telling him that the Government had all too late learned of the state of his health, of his refusal to take any exercise or answer any questions, and of certain proposals made to give him medical attention. Therefore the three of them had come to confirm the Government's wishes, which they hoped were agreeable to him; but, at the same time, they would permit themselves to add reproach to advice, if he persisted in his refusal to speak or to take exercise. They were authorised, continued Harmand, to give him facilities for less restricted movement, and to offer him anything which might amuse or entertain him, and they begged him to say if their proposals met with his approval.

While Harmand was making this courtly speech, which, we may be sure, is the 1814 version of something far more abrupt and far less ingratiating, Louis-Charles gazed at him attentively, but answered never a word. So Harmand tried again, putting his points in more detail. 'Perhaps,' said he, 'I have expressed myself badly, or perhaps, Monsieur (*sic*), you did not hear what I said. I have the honour to ask you if you would like to have a horse, a dog, toys of any sort, or companions of your own age, whom we would present to you before installing

them near you. Would you care, at this moment, if you will, to go into the garden or up to the top of the Tower? Would you like some sweets? Some cakes, perhaps?' Still there was no reply, only the same fixed gaze, which expressed indifference. So Harmand dropped the polite mode of address, except for the 'Monsieur,' and said roundly that such stubbornness in a child was inexcusable, and all the more astounding, because his visit was with the object of improving the prisoner's situation and caring for his health. But how could that object be achieved if he refused to say what he wanted? 'Is there some other way in which we can frame our proposals to you? If you will have the goodness to tell us, we will make use of it.' The reply was the same indifferent but steady gaze. So Harmand tried another method. 'If,' he said, 'your refusal to speak to us compromised yourself and nobody else, we would await with greater resignation your answer. After all, we can guess from your silence that your present situation displeases you less than we had imagined. You do not particularly wish for a change. But you do not belong to yourself. All those about you are responsible for your person and your safety. Do you wish to compromise them? Or us? What reply can we make to the Government, whose agents we are? Have the goodness to answer me, I implore you—or we shall end by commanding you to speak.' The same unwavering look, but no word of reply.

Harmand says that there was such a blend of resignation and indifference in the child's face that he seemed to be saying to them, 'What do I care? Finish off your victim.'

However Harmand persisted, and taking up a position on the prisoner's right—he calls him the prince—he asked him to be good enough to give him his hand. At the wrist and elbow there were tumours, but when they were touched Louis-Charles showed no sign of pain. Harmand then asked to be allowed to examine his legs and knees, and the boy got up from his seat—(so much for his deafness!). There were tumours also at both knees, and as he stood, he held himself like a rachitic child. His legs and thighs and arms were long and thin, his bust short; his chest and shoulders hunched and narrow. But his head was very handsome, and he had a clear pale complexion, and beautiful hair, long, and in colour light chestnut. Now that he was on his feet, Harmand asked him to take a few steps, which he did, returning at once to his seat. After which Harmand told him that such exercise would do him good, and that the cause of his illness was his apathy, and that only by doing as the deputation wished could he hope to be restored to sound health. ‘We will send you a doctor, and we sincerely hope you will answer his questions. If you will not speak, at least give us some sign that this will not displease you.’ But the boy took no notice at all of the question, and when asked to get up and walk about again, he remained seated, his elbows on the table, and an expression on his face as though he were alone in the room. Harmand and his colleagues exchanged a look of astonishment and stepped aside to confer. At that moment the prisoner's dinner arrived; a red earthenware porringer of black soup, with a few lentils in it, a plate of the same kind with a little bit of boiled beef on it, also black, a plate of

lentils, and a third plate containing six chestnuts, burnt almost to cinders. There was no knife, and no wine. Presently some grapes were brought in at the demand of Harmand, and he asked the prisoner a number of questions about his food, whether it satisfied him, and so on, but received no answer. The deputation then reluctantly came to the conclusion that nothing they could do would extract any answer, and Harmand remarked that the visit had been the more painful for them in that they could only attribute his silence to the fact that they had in some way incurred his displeasure. They proposed to have other Commissioners sent to him, who might prove more congenial to him. During their conference in the antechamber, while Louis-Charles ate his meal, they summoned the Commissioners and gave orders that the meals were to be improved. 'Is it your wish, Monsieur, that we withdraw?' asked Harmand. No answer. So they went out into the antechamber, the prisoner's door having been locked again behind them, and discussed for a quarter of an hour what had occurred. Harmand asked the Commissioners whether, in their opinion, this silence dated from the day when the child had been forced to sign the deposition against Marie-Antoinette. They repeated what they had said previously, that since the evening of that day he had not spoken a word. But Harmand found it unbelievable that a child of nine could persist in such a determination. Before leaving the Temple the three men agreed that since neither the public nor the Convention knew the true state of affairs in the prison, for which the municipality of Paris was responsible, the wise and honourable policy would be to confine



their activities to the ordering of certain provisional measures, and to make their report a secret one, for the eyes of the Committee.

I have told Harmand's story at some length because, as I said, the *évasionnistes* have given it the utmost importance, and have gone to extraordinary lengths to prove that Harmand knew he was not in the presence of the Dauphin, and that the substitute was deaf and dumb. Provins,<sup>1</sup> in his staggering analysis of Harmand's story, gets over the difficulty of a deaf boy walking when he is told to, by assuming that Harmand accompanied his requests with signs. But d'Almérás<sup>2</sup> prints a passage in which Harmand himself speaks of the death of the Dauphin shortly after his visit to him in the Temple, and points out that Mme. Royale, on leaving the Temple, had to read aloud every day in order to accustom herself to speaking with ease after her prolonged solitude. Naundorff, who had longer to study his part than any of the other pretenders, explained his silence by a resolution he had taken not to answer any questions, so wearied was he with the torments inflicted on him, and fear helped him to keep to this resolution. That, I think, is nearer the truth than the theory of a shamed silence from the moment of the signing of the document for which Simon had coached him. We know that the boy was in a state of nervous terror, and did not even speak to Gomin for several weeks. In the case of Barras, he saw someone in a magnificent uniform, someone, moreover, who spoke with the accent of the old world, and carried himself like the gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> *Le dernier roi légitime de France*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Louis XVII* (Emile-Paul, 1928).

who had surrounded him at the Tuileries. Harmand was probably as abrupt as any other official, and we have no record of how his colleagues behaved. At any rate, we may safely discount all the nonsense of 'Prince' and 'Monsieur' and 'Have the goodness to.' At the end of his life, from the arrival of Laurent onwards, the Dauphin spoke hardly at all, save to those who had his confidence. It would not have been odd if he had met the pompous and courtly speeches of Harmand, supposing Harmand to have spoken in that manner, with silence, thinking that he was the victim of a bad joke, as when one Commissioner without sensibility mocked him with his title. But it is most improbable that Harmand ever made these literary speeches, or that it would ever have occurred to him to compose them until it became necessary to his career to stand well with the returned Bourbons. Put Harmand's questions into the normal language of a Commissioner, and rob him of his patience and suavity, and the Dauphin's silence becomes easier to understand. Mark this. Harmand does not once give the impression that he thought the boy was dumb, or that he thought he was a substitute for the escaped Dauphin. All that has been read into the account afterwards. There is no jot of evidence that he suspected trickery. His pained surprise I distrust, because the condition of the Dauphin was well known in official circles, and Reverchon had seen him but two months before, and knew what was being said at that time in the Temple, and what to expect on this visit. To throw the blame on the Commune was ridiculous. They had done the mischief, but the Committee had had plenty of time to repair it—or to attempt to

repair it. Neither Laurent nor Gomin had lost any time before making known the serious condition of the prisoner's health.

There was a remarkable occurrence during this visit of the three men to the Temple. As they were going up the winding stairway to the Dauphin's room they were amazed to hear a voice complaining, and on investigating they discovered that there was a man imprisoned in the Little Tower. It was Tison, who had been left there for fifteen months, and apparently forgotten. According to Harmand the Committees had no notion that he was there, and nobody knew why he was there, least of all the poor wretch himself. Not unnaturally he asked to be liberated, since there appeared to be no reason for keeping him there as a prisoner; and if they would not set him free, at any rate they might, said he, put him into some other room. Pleading their limited authority, the three men consented to a temporary change of cell.

The visit of Harmand did not result in any drastic change in the treatment of the Dauphin. He received more small attentions, but that was due to the fact that the most ardent republican was by now hardly proof against an increasing pity for the helpless victim. It was already too late to save his life, but not too late to try to relieve the agony of his monotonous days. It was to Gomin that he owed most of the kindness he received, for Laurent was a younger and harder man and was not so easily moved. Gomin himself evidently suffered a great deal from the conflict between his better feelings and his fear of being suspected by the Committees. Mme. Royale hints that he remained at his post rather than resign, so

that he might be of service to the Dauphin, but it was probably fear that prevented his resignation. He would have become suspect at once, and the extremists would have seen in this action an attempt to communicate with royalists outside the prison. For Paris was all the time full of rumours. Someone had seen the Dauphin at St. Cloud. Someone else knew he was at Compiègne. A third had been told that he was in the provinces.

In the new year, 1795, the prisoner's name came up in the Convention once more. On January 22 Cambacérès read, as the spokesman of the two Committees, a cold and reasoned report on the question of the Dauphin's future. He pointed out that there were two courses, and only two courses, open to the Government. Continued imprisonment or exile. Continued imprisonment meant that he would remain a focus of agitation and disorder, a perpetual reminder to the royalists that the heir to the throne was still alive in Paris. Exile, on the other hand, meant that the enemies of the Republic would have in their midst someone who would keep their appetite for vengeance at its keenest, and that all the traitors who had deserted their country would have a rallying point. Of the two, continued imprisonment was the wiser course, because an enemy is less dangerous when you have him in your power than when he is among his supporters. He ended: 'The exiling of a tyrant has nearly always been the first step to his return to power, and if Rome had kept the Tarquins in prison she would not have had to fight them.' It is difficult to realise, in reading the speech, that Cambacérès was talking of a dying child. However, his advice was adopted, but not before a third

point of view had been put by Brival. 'I am astounded,' he said, 'that with so many useless crimes committed before Thermidor, you have spared the survivors of an impure family.' The uproar created by this monstrous suggestion forced Brival to withdraw what he had said. But it had been said.

Three days later Gomin took the boy into the Council Chamber, where a Commissioner named Cazeaux remarked that he didn't look very ill. Gomin replied that he was indeed ill, and Cazeaux said, 'Well, there are plenty of children worth as much as he is who are far more ill. And many die who are far more useful.' The effect of this brutality on the boy may be well imagined, and Gomin relates that he repeated the words to himself. On the same day, however, Cazeaux reported to the Committee of General Security that the prisoner's condition was serious, that he had tumours at all his joints, that he would not speak or take any exercise. It never seems to have occurred to anybody that when every step is a torture, it is better not to move about. Occasionally there came to the Temple some Commissioner who was not afraid to be friendly with the boy. One such was Debierne, a tradesman, who gave him toys, and spent time with him, trying to amuse him. He also reported to the Committee on the state of the prisoner's health. Even the doctor who attended him sent in a report of an alarming nature. He was never silent with his doctors, and the son of one of them, Naudin, told Eckard that his taciturnity and distrust of officials dated from his solitary confinement. As he became worse Gomin spent more time with him. They played draughts, and sometimes

Louis-Charles read one of the books which Gomin procured for him from the old library of the Temple.

There are two stories for the truth of which I will not vouch, but which contain nothing that is difficult to believe. One evening while he was sitting alone with Gomin, Louis-Charles got up and walked slowly towards the door of the room, looking at his guardian as he went, in a way which could not be misunderstood. Gomin at any rate understood the look only too well, and fell into a panic. 'You know that's impossible,' said the timid fellow. 'I want to see her once more,' answered Louis-Charles. 'Let me see her before I die, I beg of you.' And Gomin had to take the boy by the arm and lead him away from the door, and back to his bed, where he hid his face and sobbed. Poor Gomin explained that it was not his fault that he had to be so cruel. It was his duty that forbade him to let his charge go out of the room. 'The door is locked,' he said. 'And even if it were open, you wouldn't want to go if you thought that you were condemning me to death.' On another occasion there arrived as Commissioner one of those ruffians who speak their minds as they will, and he said, in the hearing of the boy, 'This child hasn't six weeks to live.' Laurent and Gomin made signs to him, but he went on, 'I tell you he'll be an idiot, or dead, in six weeks.' Later Louis-Charles said to Gomin, 'Yet I've never done harm to anybody.'

Meanwhile Laurent had enemies who could not forgive him for having been too active under the Terror. These enemies bombarded the Committees ceaselessly with petitions for his removal, as unfit to be the guardian of

the prisoners. Every hint that all was not well at the Temple was used against him, and in February the Committee of General Security was informed of a strange rumour that the Dauphin had been dead for three weeks, and that he had probably been poisoned. On March 21 Laurent's resignation was accepted, but he would probably have been replaced anyhow, for the Committee had already decided upon his successor. He himself was not reluctant to leave the Temple, where there was no career for a young man, and to get himself mixed up in active politics again. He was arrested after some rioting in May 1795, and those who maintain that he was the tool of Barras, put in the Temple to facilitate the escape of the prisoner, will have to explain why he did not appeal to his master in his trouble. He was released in October, and Barras gave him a post under the Directory. He went in 1796 to the Leeward Islands as secretary to the French agent, returned, served in the Ministry of Police, and then went to Italy as an inspector attached to the army. In 1799 he sailed to Guiana as secretary to the agent Hugues. He died in Cayenne in 1807, after a restless and not very successful life.

There was an interval of ten days before Gomin's newly appointed colleague, Etienne Lasne, arrived at the Temple.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GOMIN AND LASNE ; THE DEATH OF LOUIS-CHARLES

WE have arrived at the month of April 1795, and the Dauphin is within little more than eight weeks of his death. But before continuing the story I propose to deal with a few questions which most of my readers will be asking themselves at this point. Who was responsible for the crime of slowly killing the child, and why was the crime permitted? How is it that normal men, fathers of families, who came day after day to the Temple during the last months of the Dauphin's life, made no concerted protest against what they saw? How is it that in the Convention his continued imprisonment could be discussed calmly? How is it that the orders of Barras and of Harmand were to a large extent ignored, and that the Dauphin depended on his guardians for any kindness that was shown to him? How is it that a country which had found it difficult to accustom itself to the idea of having no King, and which, by a large majority, was weary of the ferocious cruelties accompanying the establishment of the Republic, apparently sat still while the son of Louis XVI was being done to death? Are we to believe that the ordinary Frenchman of the countryside, had he been confronted with the prisoner in the Temple at the end of the spring



of '95, would have said that the Government was quite right to treat him so ?

A comprehensive answer, I think, to these questions is that Fear was the chief emotion of the time. The people had passed through the Terror, and their nerves had broken down. The outbreak of joy after Thermidor was something very like madness, but there is in it the note of anxiety, as though men were determined to make the most of what might be only an interlude before a new Terror, or a civil war. The armies had saved the Revolution, and founded the Republic securely, but the internal affairs of the country were in a hopeless state. While the profiteers danced and revelled and speculated, the poor sat in the gutter outside the bread shops. And everybody was afraid. The extremists knew that their only chance of saving their heads was to become moderates as quickly as possible, and the moderates knew that if they swung a little too far to the right they would be denounced as counter-revolutionaries. Everyone watched his neighbour, and nobody felt safe. Outside the Catholic west and the royalist circles, nobody had much time to think of the Dauphin, and the ordinary public did not know the truth about his captivity. Those who did know the truth did not dare to protest openly—with one or two rare exceptions. The Commissioners and the personnel of the prison were naturally more subject to this fear than others, and probably regarded the orders of Barras and Harmand as propaganda; a kind of loud assurance to the public that there was to be no more brutality. Clemency was the order of the day, and both Barras and Harmand knew that the Commissioners would tell their families how shocked

the deputations had been, and that the families would tell their friends, and so on. But without a written order nobody was going to risk too much kindness.

But there is another side. The convinced republicans regarded the Dauphin not as a human being, but as a problem, and a very embarrassing problem at that. Cambacérès, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, stated the case for them dispassionately and ably. To men who put the safety of the Republic before everything, whether they were those who loved it fiercely or those whose past made it impossible for them to contemplate a restoration of Monarchy, the Dauphin was not a small boy in a prison, but the heir of the centuries. He was the French Crown and the lilies, the inspiration of that protest which had twice crossed the frontiers in arms and come to within a few days' march of Paris. And they had no doubt that all the vindictive folly talked by Provence and Artois was talked in his name. Hence the precautions taken to guard him closely, and to prevent communication with the world outside. Hence the continued separation of him from his sister, which many have called a further meaningless cruelty. The Government had had experience of the resource of the royal family, and of the conspiracies which resulted from secret correspondence. He who challenged this inhuman approach to the problem did so at the peril of being told that he cared more for the preservation of this one privileged being than for the safety of the Republic, and fear as well as conscience made cowards of many a good citizen who cared little for politics, and would have welcomed the reign of Louis XVII. For the Government was discredited and detested, and

large numbers were looking vaguely towards a deliverance from the uncertainties of these days, and the more intelligent began to imagine some sort of Council of Regency to act for Louis XVII, a Council that would make use of the survivors of '91 to build a new Monarchy which should embody all the good won by the Revolution. Malouet talked of some great man who might ride into Paris on horseback and proclaim the young King. Away in Russia Catherine said, 'France needs a great man, a man of brains and audacity, towering over his contemporaries and perhaps even over his century. Is there such a man?' Saint-Just too had prophesied the coming of the soldier who would rebuild France. Already there was in men's minds an adumbration, as it were, of Bonaparte.

The Fear of which I have spoken, though it brooded over most of France, had no power over the gallant Charette, who tried to do for the Dauphin what La Rouerie had failed to do for Louis XVI. There has been much controversy over the treaty which was signed near Nantes in February 1795. For two years the Vendée had been fighting the Revolution, and now at last, following the amnesty voted by the Convention, the representatives of the Republic faced Charette and his Generals across a long table set up in a tent. Charette's behaviour was odd. Not only was he polite and friendly to the representatives of the Government which he loathed, and which he had fought for two years to overthrow, but he was willing to recognise the Republic, in return for the restoration of religion in the Vendée. His followers had taken it for granted that his first demand would be that the Dauphin and Mme. Royale should be handed over to him at once,

and a rumour spread rapidly during the negotiations that this was indeed about to happen. From this rumour grew the story of the secret clauses, by which the Republic bound itself to deliver the prisoners to Charette, so long as this part of the Agreement was not made public. There is no reason to believe that there ever was a secret agreement on this subject. Béjarry, who was one of Charette's representatives, denies all knowledge of such a thing, and Charette himself, in his Belleville proclamation, after the death of the Dauphin, does not even allude to secret clauses in the treaty. The probability is that, in order to get round his intractability, and still more that of such men as Stofflet, the representatives very skilfully, and without engaging themselves even verbally, allowed Charette to think that they were not unwilling to deliver the prisoners to him. They may have conveyed the fact that they could not compromise themselves by any definite promise, even by word of mouth, but that he might take it that the Government would not be unfavourable to such an arrangement. That the Government can ever have conceived such an idea is beyond possibility, but that it suited their purpose to give this impression is undeniable.

At this point it may not be without interest to turn aside into a by-way, one of the many romantic by-ways of this story of the Dauphin in the Temple. No account of those who schemed to rescue him can omit the name of Mrs. Atkyns, the pretty Irish actress who was the illegitimate daughter of Thomas Walpole, a Westmeath Justice of the Peace, and a certain Elizabeth

Graham. She was born in Dublin in the year 1758, went on the stage in her native town, and came to England, where she appeared at Drury Lane in 1778. In the next year she married a gentleman named Atkyns, of Ketteringham Hall in the county of Norfolk. Some years later husband and wife went to live in Lille. After 1789 she may have paid occasional visits to Paris and to Versailles, but by 1791 she had returned to England. But a legend grew up round the name of Charlotte Atkyns. It was said that she had made the acquaintance of the King and Queen while living at Versailles, and had become popular in Court circles; that she later succeeded in having an interview with Marie-Antoinette in the Conciergerie, and spent at least two million francs in various conspiracies to save the royal family. Some even said that she had succeeded in rescuing the Dauphin. There are, however, enough documents to-day to dispel this picturesque legend. She lived at Lille, not at Versailles. According to her own account of her stay in France, in a letter to Louis XVIII in 1797, she met the Queen by chance shortly before the flight to Varennes, and offered her services. It is odd that nobody at the Tuileries was sufficiently struck by the presence of an Irish stranger to mention it. Of her famous interview with Marie-Antoinette in prison she gave two versions. A letter written by her to William Pitt on February 2, 1795, in the course of which she informed him that the Dauphin was no longer in the Temple, and that she had helped to rescue him, speaks of her conversation with the Queen 'in the Temple,' and of her promise as she knelt at the Queen's feet, never to abandon the royal children. But

she told the Abbé Edgeworth in London that she had taken a letter to the Queen in the Conciergerie, escorted by Hébert, who, being under an obligation to her, accepted a heavy bribe. She was too frightened to speak, and when the Queen, trembling with fear, had taken the letter and read it, Hébert hustled her out of the cell. As for saving the Dauphin, the letter which she wrote to the future Louis XVIII in 1797 speaks of the sacrifices she made during the lifetime of Louis XVII. So she evidently had no doubts about his death in the Temple.

The facts of the matter appear to be these. Charlotte Atkins was a kind-hearted, vain and ambitious woman, who was deeply touched by the misfortunes of the royal family, and became the dupe of a number of adventurers and *émigrés*. They got money out of her, but not nearly as much as she pretended to have spent, and kept up a pretence of readiness to take action. In later years, when she found that she had spent her money for nothing, she became embittered, and her correspondence is too full of complaints about the sacrifices she had made, and the plight to which her unswerving loyalty had reduced her. The little circle of which she was the centre no doubt kept her informed of imaginary attempts to rescue the Dauphin, and one at least of them appears to have allowed her to think that the escape had actually taken place. The only honest man among them, Frotté, as soon as he had been disillusioned, did his best to put the truth to her. But even when she knew the truth, she continued to repeat the stories which composed her legend, and continued to importune the ministers and officials of the British and French Governments, not only with claims

for her past services, but with secret projects, such as a scheme for imprisoning Bonaparte.

It was a vulgar journalist from Nantes, Gabriel Peltier, who first turned Charlotte's vague and sentimental interest in the royal family into something more active and exciting. He corresponded with her in November 1792, when he had forgotten his revolutionary past and had become a royalist pamphleteer. Probably some report of her beauty attracted him to her, but certainly her money attracted him still more. They discussed in letters the rescue of Louis XVI, and he, seeing her catch fire, allowed her to suppose that he was the leader of a large gang of daring and resourceful conspirators, and that there would be no difficulty in entering the Temple and setting Louis free. Then he mentioned, with a certain hesitation, as though the subject were distasteful to him, the necessity for a sum of money to set the wheels in action. And unfortunately he was penniless. Now, if she would supply the money, he would guarantee to organise the rescue with the help of his trusted lieutenants. In December he came to London, and wrote to her at Ketteringham, telling her that her courage and sensibility astounded him and shamed his countrymen, and that though the son of rich parents, he had given all his money to his needy friends. He enclosed a bill for the various expenses of the conspiracy, and mentioned that he was about to employ the Baron d'Auerweck, a Transylvanian nobleman, too poor to procure maps and booklets about the Temple or to undertake the necessary journey from Amiens—'One can't very well send him less than fifty guineas.' In his next letter he mentioned that the Duc de Choiseul

was lodging with him. And a day later he wrote a letter which is of the highest interest. Knowing perfectly well that Louis could not be rescued, but wishing to remain in this profitable employment, he suggested that if they could not save Louis XVI, they might save his son. He could be carried out of the Temple in a basket, or disguised.

As soon as the King was dead, Peltier and Charlotte Atkins began to consider the rescue of the Queen, and in August he was impressing on her how important it was for her to direct operations from England, instead of coming to Paris, where she would be guillotined. What was meant was, 'Where you would soon discover how your money is being wasted, and how completely hopeless is the whole affair.' Twelve hundred and fifty louis, he told her, would save the two children. Was she prepared to put up the money?

Plan succeeded plan, without any difference being made to the lot of the Queen or her children. Money is still the key-note of the correspondence. For instance: 'If you have a few guineas to spare, you owe them to this charming and interesting young man' (Auerweck). And shortly afterwards he presented the charming and interesting young man to her. The most interesting thing about him was his complete inability to do anything but express himself in a long-winded and tiresome fashion. At twenty-seven, which was his age, he had learned to demand money in a more tactful and metaphorical fashion than his fellow-conspirator Peltier. He asked for less, and he asked for it in a high-falutin style that often obscured his meaning and so delayed his hopes. He was probably a police spy, and certainly had no interest what-



ever in the escape of the royal family beyond what such an event might bring him in the way of cash or credit. After the Queen's death Peltier wrote to Charlotte saying that he abjured for ever the name of Frenchman, and then seems to have dropped out of the circle to do political journalism. The field was left to Auerweck, to a gouty Breton lawyer of forty-four named Cormier, and to Butler, his brother-in-law. Auerweck did not attempt to play a leading part. Peltier's position was filled by Cormier, an ineffectual hypocrite and liar, who wrote to Charlotte two days before the Queen's death to say that she need have no fear for the life of Marie-Antoinette, and for many months kept the foolish woman in a state of nervous excitement by hinting that the Dauphin was soon to be rescued, was on the point of being rescued, was on the very eve of his rescue. All that was needed was a little more money, and the letters in which he pretended he had fallen in love with her, since all was pretence with him except the pain of his gout, must have been, in spite of such reiterated demands, a relief from the philosophical discussions of young Auerweck. To the very end, and even after the death of the Dauphin, Charlotte believed in Cormier's good intentions. The measure of her stupidity may be taken from the ridiculous letters of this arch-humbug.

The third member of the unappetising trio was Butler, a native of St. Domingo, and an *émigré* of '91, whose wife was guillotined during the Terror, and who picked up a living in England as a commercial agent. The small part which he may have taken in the affairs of the conspirators was almost certainly an excuse for getting some of the money that seemed to be so easily come by. And in 1805

he was still reminding Charlotte that she had helped him before, and imploring her to send him enough to enable him to come out of his hiding place, a coffee-house in Brook Street.

Not unnaturally Louis de Frotté was not at all welcome when his relations with Charlotte Atkins brought him into touch with those who were duping her. For he was a brave and perfectly sincere man of action, an ex-officer of an infantry regiment, and twenty-three years old when the Revolution broke out. He had probably met Charlotte in the early years of the Revolution, and there is little doubt that he later fell in love with her. Cormier and his friends were careful not to let him into the secrets of the game they were playing, but when, at the end of December 1794, Frotté went to see Cormier, he was informed that the whole affair was over, and that there was no longer any need to worry. The Dauphin had been rescued, and was safe. Frotté evidently believed this, for he wrote later to Charlotte, asking her for details of what had happened, but by March 1795 he had discovered the trickery, and wrote to her to tell her that her agents had been deceiving her all the time.

Thus the romantic legend of a beautiful Irishwoman to whom the Queen of France entrusted her son and daughter, and who was the daring and active contriver of numerous attempts to rescue the prisoners of the Temple, turns out to be a particularly sordid story. There is no evidence that at first Charlotte Atkins was not moved by genuine pity. But by the time she was in the hands of her unscrupulous associates, the pity was probably not unmingled with a certain desire to be in the centre of

exciting events, and to be in communication with important people. The less said about Cormier and Peltier and Auerweck the better. It will be noticed that all their undertakings were on paper, that nothing was ever done to rescue the Dauphin. Whatever Charlotte Atkyns, in her Norfolk home, imagined to be the situation in the Temple, the three adventurers and their hangers-on must certainly have known that they were not likely to succeed where men of action had been powerless. Not that they wanted to endanger their lives by really attempting anything. They were content to draw their money, and Auerweck particularly enjoyed practising his literary style and his philosophical theories on the charming lady who was so easy to fool.

But while this villainy was going on, the Dauphin was passing beyond any help that the bravest or most fortunate might have brought to him.

Etienne Lasne, ex-soldier and now a house-painter, arrived at the Temple on April 1. He too had seen the boy at the Tuileries and recognised him, and at once set to work to make himself agreeable. He was a more vigorous and practical man than Gomin and left the latter to devote more of his time to Mme. Royale. After the first cleaning of the Dauphin's room, Laurent had not bothered much, but Lasne at once took matters in hand and had the bed disinfected again, and the room scoured. Gomin had probably been afraid to carry out anything like this on his own initiative. At first Louis-Charles was frightened of Lasne, as he was of all strangers, and the soldierly bearing and direct manner of his new guardian



*Madame Royale by Kocharski.*

did not win his trust for some time. But later on he got over his fear, and talked to him—how much we do not know, for Lasne, like Gomin, contradicted himself in later years. Once he said he talked to the boy every day, and on another occasion, that he only once heard him speak. This and other contradictions, probably due to failing memory, or to a desire to ingratiate himself, have been used to the full by writers who insist on the theory of the dumb substitute.

Lasne afterwards described the Dauphin at this time. His appearance had not changed very much, but there was a dull, dead look about his complexion, his shoulders were hunched, and his chest contracted. His legs and arms were thin and wasted, and on his right knee and left wrist were large swellings. Alarmed by his appearance, Lasne combed his hair and washed him regularly, and brushed his clothes. Those who were surprised that he took so much trouble with his prisoner were told bluntly that he had not accepted his position in order to be an instrument of a new Terror. He even tried to spare Louis-Charles the noise of the bolts, which had always scared him, and he had them greased and oiled, and told Gourlet the turnkey that he need only close two of the three doors which prevented the boy from wandering about the Tower. But next day he had to countermand the order. A Commissioner who noticed that one of the doors was open, insisted that the instructions of the Government must be obeyed to the letter. From day to day the good offices of the two guardians depended on the whim of the Commissioners who happened to be on duty, and there was no appeal against those who conceived it

to be their duty to impose the utmost rigour of the regulations.

Beauchesne gives us a picture of Lasne singing old songs of the French Guard, to amuse the boy, with Gomin accompanying him on the violin. But all such efforts to please the prisoner must have been heartbreaking enough, since his mind was becoming clouded with the memory of his sufferings, and God knows what phantoms haunted him in the long darkness of the night. For there was no barbarous cruelty among all the barbarous cruelties inflicted on him so utterly inexplicable as the order which forbade him company at night. That there was such an order, plainly set forth, is obvious from the fact that not even Lasne dared to remain in the room after dark. Nor had any single Commissioner the courage to disobey this order. But if he had to leave him alone when he had undressed him, Lasne tried to make up for it during the day by reading to him, playing cards with him, and taking him to the top of the Tower for exercise. Louis-Charles naturally disliked this, because he was now so weak, and walked with such difficulty, that he had to be almost carried along. All those attached to the prison—the soldiers, the turnkeys, the cook-boys, the tradesmen who came and went, the workmen, the Commissioners; every one of them either saw Louis-Charles growing weaker before their eyes, or heard how it was with him from others. And the Commissioners, returning to their homes, must have told their wives what was happening. Yet such alleviations of his misery as Lasne and Gomin could contrive with the help of a not actively hostile Commissioner were all that he could now expect.

Meanwhile Charles IV of Spain, who had courageously undertaken a war on behalf of the French Monarchy, was still doing everything in his power to save his cousin's children. He made the chief condition of all the terms of peace that were discussed during the endless negotiations that the children should be handed over to him. Louis de Frotté, too, was busy in his vague way, coming and going between Charette and Mrs. Atkyns in London. He it was who was to be the hero of Regnault-Warin's romance, and to effect the rescue of the Dauphin.

When Charette had signed the agreement with the Convention in February 1795, Frotté gave up all hope of a rescue, and instead suggested that he should be imprisoned in the Temple in order to take care of the Dauphin, which proves that he neither believed in the story of the substitution, nor in that of the secret articles. Among his correspondence is a letter which he wrote to Charlotte Atkyns on March 16, 1795, from Rennes. In this letter he tells her that he has had an interview with a member of the Convention, who said to him, 'The sacrifice which you suggest would be useless. It would get you into trouble, and would do no good to the son of Louis XVI. Under Robespierre they so debased and brutalised the unfortunate child, physically and morally, that he will not live. . . . If you saw him, you would be disgusted and heartbroken, and your sacrifice would achieve nothing, for he will die soon.' Chantelauze makes the interesting suggestion that Regnault-Warin got the idea for his book from the conversation of Frotté's associates.

The Committee of General Security took no notice of

the reports of the Commissioners on the Dauphin's health, though he was now growing worse more rapidly. Nothing that Lasne and Gomin could do was able to arrest the progress of his disease. At the beginning of May the daily report of the affairs of the Temple which had to be placed before the Committee contained the words, 'The little Capet is indisposed.' This bulletin was ignored. So was the next: 'The little Capet is dangerously ill.' The Committee no doubt said that his guardians were showing too much sympathy and becoming royalists. On May 5 the words: 'His life is in danger' forced them to take action, and on the next day they sent a distinguished physician and surgeon, Desault, to attend the patient, having ordered that the doctor must see Louis-Charles only in the presence of his guardians. Pierre-Joseph Desault, who was the senior house-surgeon at the Humanité, made a thorough examination of Louis-Charles, and asked him a number of questions, to which he received no reply. He appreciated at once the gravity of the boy's condition, noted the scrofulous tumours, the condition of marasmus and exhaustion, and prescribed medicine to be taken every half-hour. On leaving the Temple he went to the Committee and told them the serious view he took of the illness. He explained that there was but one chance—and that a doubtful one—of saving his life; he must be sent into the country immediately. The Committee refused to consider the idea. Next day, May 7, Desault paid a second visit, and ordered treatment for the tumours. Lasne applied the lotion, and also tried to induce Louis-Charles to take his medicine. But this he would not do, until he had seen Lasne taste it. He was now so weak that



he had to be carried to the top of the Tower for fresh air, but Desault had won his confidence, and he no longer remained silent during the visits. Sometimes when the Commissioners announced that it was time for the doctor to be going, Louis-Charles would seize the flap of his coat and try to hold him back, not wishing to ask permission for him to remain. Desault told this to Nicolle the bookseller. And Simien-Despréaux records that one day Louis-Charles said to the doctor, 'Oh, don't leave me alone with these wicked men.' He naturally regarded the doctor as in some sense a protector, and clung to him as his only connexion with the outside world. As for Desault, he knew that his task was hopeless. He had been called in to treat a patient, had prescribed the only treatment which he considered effective, and had been snubbed for his pains. His distress of mind was such that he himself fell ill with fever and dysentery. His health had already been impaired by a succession of shocks. He had been summoned before the Commune in 1792, denounced by Chaumette and imprisoned in 1793, and from that moment had gone in fear of his life, for his royalist sympathies were well known. He was taken ill on the night of May 29, and died on June 1, at the age of fifty-one. A rumour at once spread that he had been poisoned—a rumour that was to prove very useful to future historians. Some said he had been poisoned for refusing to poison his patient, others that he had been poisoned because he *had* poisoned his patient, and was likely to denounce his employers. A third school said that he had been poisoned because he might publish the fact that his patient was not Louis XVII. But this last theory was only invented fifty

years later, for the benefit of one of the pretenders. Regnault-Warin, of course, outstripped the rest by printing in his romance a faked extract from Desault's diary. Desault receives a box containing five hundred louis, as his pay for conniving at the Dauphin's escape. He refuses the bribe, and reports the affair to the Committee. Naturally the Committee gets rid of him at once, but not before he has been able to attest that the Dauphin has escaped, and that he is attending a substitute.

All this rubbish is swept away by the details of the autopsy, by the use of common sense, and by all that we know of the character of Desault. The story that the poisoning took place at a banquet to which he had been invited by certain deputies of the Convention is only worth mentioning as an instance of what people were ready to believe.

In the same week died Desault's two assistants, Choppart and Doublet. They, too, were claimed by the people who saw poison in every death, and the coincidence was worked for all it was worth, and a good deal more than it was worth.

Desault had paid his last visit to the Temple on May 29. For six days the dying boy was left without any medical attention whatsoever. Presumably Gomin and Lasne continued the treatment ordered by Desault, but there is nothing but the complete indifference of the Government to explain this appalling neglect. Did Lasne and Gomin protest? Did they not insist on medical attention for the boy? Did nobody, no Commissioner, no guard, call attention to what was taking place? We do not know. There is no document to tell us. But even when,

on June 3, a successor to Desault was chosen, the Committee of General Security waited two more days before they ratified the choice. It was June 5 before Pelletan, a doctor with a brilliant reputation, paid his first visit to Louis-Charles. He was so alarmed at his condition, that he at once asked for a colleague to share his responsibility, and he named Dumangin. Nevertheless it was June 7 before Dumangin visited the Temple.

Pelletan found the child among his toys and books, and recorded that he was much struck by the order and cleanliness of the room, and the care which Gomin and Lasne expended upon the prisoner, who was suffering from chronic diarrhoea. He realised that it was too late to save his life, but he ordered certain precautions to avoid undue noise and made changes in the diet. He also had Louis-Charles carried to a larger and brighter room in the small tower, with a view over the gardens. It had been his mother's room at the beginning of her captivity. He had the bars removed from the windows, and as he expressed himself rather loudly, Louis-Charles begged him to speak low, since he feared that his sister might hear. 'I would not like her to know that I am ill, as it would cause her great distress.' To someone else who saw him during the last days of his life he also spoke. Bellanger, who had been one of the King's architects, came on duty as Commissioner, and the child bade him good-morning, and told him that he could not walk. He remained seated, with a volume of Marmontel's stories beside him. It was too heavy for him to lift. Bellanger had no difficulty in recognising the prisoner, whom he had seen at Versailles, and he made a sketch of him. Later on he got a

sculptor to make a porcelain bust from this sketch, and it was offered to Louis XVIII in 1814.

The change of room appeared to do Louis-Charles good, for although he was too weak to say much, he smiled, and seemed to suffer less. He was able to sit at the window and watch the birds. Beneath him there was sunlit grass, and the warm summer air was a luxury for him. On June 6 Pelletan, who paid three visits a day (according to his Memoirs), asked Louis-Charles if he was pleased with the change, and received the answer, 'Oh, yes. Very pleased.' On the next day, June 7, Dumangin accompanied Pelletan to the Temple in the morning. They learned that he had fainted during the previous day, and found him considerably weaker. They made certain alterations in the diet, and Pelletan's detailed prescription shows that he did not minimise the seriousness of the situation. When evening fell the patient became suddenly worse, and an urgent message was sent to Pelletan, summoning him at once to the Temple. He replied in the following words: 'Citizens, Your description of the patient's condition does not lead me to believe that there is any immediate anxiety. Since the night is not a suitable time for the application of any kind of remedy, I think you should merely give the patient half a grain of diascordium diluted in a tablespoonful of wine. Although I am completely exhausted after my day's work, and although it is already eleven o'clock, I would come at once to the child if I thought I could be of the smallest service to him. Apart from this, you are well aware that citizen Dumangin, doctor at the Charité, has been appointed to assist me in the case. We propose to visit him together to-morrow

morning.' On this day, when one would have thought that the hardest hearts would by now have been touched, a Commissioner with the appropriate name of Hébert criticised Gomin and Lasne for having carried Louis-Charles into the room in the Little Tower without an order from the Committee.

Pelletan arrived at eight o'clock on June 8, and Louis-Charles was sitting up. The two doctors came together at eleven, and their bulletin to the Committee announced a feeble pulse, a distended abdomen and continual bilious evacuations. They stated that his condition was very grave, and that they proposed to return in the evening. It was apparently only on this day they learned that the boy was left alone at night. That they had not made enquiries seems too fantastic to be true. That Gomin and Lasne would not have told them is no easier to believe. But this is a documented fact. It was only now that the Committee was informed that an intelligent nurse was essential. They might have added 'At once.' The Committee took its time, and neither Gomin nor Lasne dared to suggest that the matter was urgent. On the previous evening, when Gomin came into the boy's room, he had thought he seemed a little better, and they had exchanged a few words. Then Gomin had noticed that the little fellow was crying, and had asked him whether he was in great pain. And Louis-Charles answered: '*Toujours seul. Ma mère est restée dans l'autre tour.*'

On the next day, the last day of his life, Louis-Charles took only a little soup, served by the faithful Caron. At midday, when the doctors had left, a certain Antoine Damont arrived to take up his duties as Commissioner

for twenty-four hours. He recognised the Dauphin, whom he had seen with his mother at the Tuileries, and he knew that death was at hand. He enquired whether there were not doctors and a nurse in attendance, and was told the position. So Damont decided to send Gomin to the Committee at once, to explain to them the urgent necessity for a nurse, and while Gomin was away he helped Lasne to do what little was possible for the child. It had not occurred to either of the doctors to stay beside their patient, so that when the Committee sent a letter authorising them to choose a nurse, nothing could be done until they took it into their heads to return. Lasne and Damont, neither of them with any medical qualification, remained at the bedside, and gave the doses which they had been ordered to give. About two o'clock, having taken a spoonful of medicine, Louis-Charles broke into a cold sweat and they thought they heard in his throat the death-rattle. The two men, in terror, despatched a message to Pelletan telling him what had happened, and bidding him come at once without fail. The crisis passed, however, and Damont went to attend to official business, leaving Lasne alone by the bedside. In a very short time there was another crisis, and the dying boy said, 'Take me somewhere where I shall not suffer so much.'

A little after this, at a few minutes to three o'clock, Louis-Charles felt that he was suffocating. Lasne raised him from the pillow, and the boy put his arms round his neck. Then he sighed deeply, and Lasne felt the pressure of the arms relax, and disengaging them from his neck, laid him down, dead.

In this manner, and upon this day, the eighth of June, God in His mercy set a term to the short life which had seemed so long, and removed a burden too heavy for those small shoulders to bear. Death, which all men dread, came out of the perpetual twilight of that prison in the image of a friend, and Louis-Charles received the reward of a fortitude beyond his years. He had endured tribulations which he could not understand and suffered ignominies which he was powerless to resent, and the playtime of childhood had been filled with perplexity and sorrow. It should have been his lot to learn the business of kingship in the palaces of his fathers, to grow slowly to manhood, loved and protected, until summoned to continue the long story of the Monarchy. He should have sat enthroned above that still resplendent feudal society which had grown weary and lost its soul, and perhaps he might have attempted the compromise desired by moderate men, and harnessed the new ideas to the old institution. He should have died in full majesty upon a great canopied bed, with the chivalry of France about him, and with the accumulated ceremonial of eight centuries to challenge the impermanence of earthly things. He should have died with the consolations of his religion to ease his passage from this world to the next; fortified with the last rites of the Church, anointed and assoiled. And dying, he should have handed on to the men of his line the inheritance of Hugh Capet, crowned in Noyon by the Oise when Christendom was young, and those older memories of Charlemagne and of the Roman soldier whom St. Remigius baptised. But it was his destiny to expiate sins of which he had never heard,

for it was, finally, upon him in his innocence that vengeance was taken for insolent tyrannies and careless injustice. In a few short years there was blasted a chasm too wide to be bridged between the world of his infancy and the new Europe. He was too young to wonder that what had seemed so secure could vanish so completely, until the empty graces and the elaborate ritual of Versailles should seem no more than a costume-play; and too young to be astounded at the strangeness in all about him, when, in those few short years, the rhythm of life changed from the slow and stately measure of a minuet to the strong beat of that immortal song of war. The Revolution could make no compromise, for there were not two kinds of truth. The innocent perished with the guilty. And perhaps it is the complete innocence and the extreme youth of Louis-Charles that accounts for the unwillingness to believe that he was slowly done to death. Not all the solemn beauty of the prose out of which the chivalrous Burke erected his memorial to Marie-Antoinette should blind our eyes to her treachery. Not all the insistence upon the weak will and indecision of Louis XVI should hide from us his dealings with the enemies of his country. Not all the condemnation of those who ordered or permitted the September massacres, nor all the vileness of creatures who shed blood in order to be popular with the filthy dregs of the brothels and taverns should distract our attention from the vision which better men had seen, and which they followed to the end. Even for the terrible massacre of unarmed priests and aristocrats there was the excuse that they were in league with the invading armies—a belief honestly and widely held in



Paris. But for this one death, for this slow killing of a little boy, there is nothing to be said. He was still alive, still a year from his death when, in the critical ten hours of Fleurus, the Revolution passed from doubt and uncertainty, and became an established thing. But as Danton's campaign for mercy failed to draw attention to the victim in the Temple, so the reaction after Thermidor passed him by, and the triumphant entry into Brussels brought him no hope. His death was willed by those in power because his life was an embarrassment to them. So long as he remained alive the French Monarchy existed. Had they assassinated him in a fit of fury history would find it easier to pardon them.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BURIAL OF LOUIS-CHARLES; THE PROBLEM OF THE SKELETON

THOSE who assert that the boy who died in the Temple on June 8, 1795, was not Louis-Charles, maintain that the behaviour of Gomin and Lasne and of the Committee after three o'clock on that day was very suspicious, and that there was a certain amount of irregularity in carrying out the official formalities connected with his death. And they ask why Mme. Royale was not allowed to certify that the dead child was her brother.

Gomin and Lasne, as if acting on orders, decided that the greatest secrecy must be observed with regard to the death of Louis-Charles. There was only one man who knew what had happened—Gourlet, the turnkey—and they shut him into a room so that he should not tell anyone else. They then wrote to the Committee, reporting the decease of the prisoner, and saying that they intended to continue the service of the Temple as though nothing had happened. This Lasne and Damont did, while Gomin took the message to the Tuileries. They sent out for medicine, ordered broth from the kitchen, and took care that nobody should enter the room where the corpse lay. When Pelletan arrived, not before 4.30, he was shown into the room, and then kept, more or less as a prisoner, until the instructions of the Committee

should arrive. This comedy was continued for the rest of the day and on through the night, until the following morning; and the explanation of it seems to me to be the first that is likely to occur to anyone who has followed this story. Gomin and Lasne appeared to be acting under orders because they really were acting under orders. Neither of them would have taken upon himself to behave in this fashion without some safeguard. Their whole conduct with their prisoner proves that. Damont, the Commissioner, was with them, and that his authority was recognised is shown by the fact that it was he who ordered Gomin to go to the Committee on two occasions. We have no written record nor even any verbal record of instructions issued to him in the event of the death of the Dauphin, but it is clear that any Commissioner who came on duty at this time must have considered the possibility of the prisoner's death. The imperative thing for the Government was to be able to produce the various legal documents in connexion with the death, but particularly the certificate of autopsy, before the news of what had occurred became general. We have seen how it had been rumoured that the Convention had determined to poison Louis-Charles, and that Desault had been removed for refusing to carry out his instructions to that effect. And, as a matter of fact, as soon as the news had been read out by Sevestre on June 9, that very rumour began again. There were many who remembered Chabot's 'It is the apothecary's job to rid France of Capet's son,' and Barère's plain words about extirpation. The fear of public disturbance made the Convention anxious to have everything in order, and it is worthy of note that the

suddenness of the death was what startled the general mass of the citizens. There had been no bulletins in the newspapers, and no announcements in the Convention, and many people, especially in the provinces, who had heard that he had been seen here, there and everywhere, were now startled by the news of the Dauphin's death, before they knew that he had been seriously ill. This very unexpectedness lent colour to the talk of foul play.

The legal formalities which it was necessary to observe in the event of a death at this period were five in number. First, the death had to be registered within twenty-four hours, not counting the day of decease, with the police of the Section in which the death occurred, and the registration must be witnessed by the two next of kin or the two nearest friends of the male sex, both majors. Secondly, a copy of this registration must be made by the Police Commissioner, and sent to the Commune. Thirdly, the civil authority must prepare a death certificate within twenty-four hours of the announcement made to the Police Commissioner. Fourthly, there must be a burial permit. Fifthly, there must be a burial certificate. In the case of Louis-Charles the five conditions were fulfilled. Dusser, Police Commissioner of the Temple Section, registered the death on June 10, and it was witnessed by Lasne and Gomin, in the presence of Arnault and Goddet, Civil Commissioners of the same Section. The document was destroyed in the fire at the Town Hall in 1871, but Beauchesne found a duplicate and reproduced it in his book. Secondly, a copy of this document was sent to the Commune. It is extant. Thirdly, the death certificate was prepared by the Commune on June 12. This docu-

ment also was burnt in 1871. Beauchesne had seen it, and produced a facsimile in his book. Fourthly, the burial permit was issued by the Committee of General Security. It is now in the Police Archives. Fifthly, the burial certificate, signed by eight witnesses, including Dusser, Gomin and Lasne, is also in the Police Archives. Mme. Royale, being a girl and a minor, was not a competent witness. But even had she been, it is easy to understand that either to spare her feelings, or to avoid a scene, they would have decided not to bring her into the presence of her dead brother. She herself had no doubt of his death. The original edition of her *Memoirs* attributes it to the dirt and squalor in which he lived during his solitary confinement and to the cruel way in which he was treated. And in the after years she made more than one reference to his end, particularly when Naundorff was claiming to be her brother. She, too, heard the story that he had been poisoned, and denied it—not that she doubted the barbarity of the Committee, but because she knew that the doctors who performed the autopsy found no trace of poison.

While Pelletan was attesting the death, Gomin returned with Bourguignon, secretary to the Committee. The Committee had decided that, since the Convention had risen for the day when the message arrived, they would not inform them of the event until the next day. - Meanwhile the secret was to be kept, the routine of the prison continued, and Pelletan and Dumangin were to choose two colleagues, and proceed at once to an autopsy.

On the next morning, June 9, Sevestre, representing

the Committee of General Security, read to the Convention a short and unemotional report of what had occurred in the Temple. He sketched the progress of the disease in a few sentences, and said that the news had reached the Convention at a quarter-past two on June 8, and that he had all the papers, which were in order. Either he was lying fluently or the *Moniteur* misquoted him. Louis-Charles did not die until almost three o'clock, and the papers were neither there nor in order on June 9. He was probably lying, to reassure his hearers and the public outside. In any case, the news was received in silence, and with complete lack of interest.

Shortly after eleven on the same morning Pelletan and Dumangin and their two colleagues, Lassus and Jeanroy, arrived at the Temple to perform the autopsy. All except Dumangin had seen the Dauphin before his imprisonment. Jeanroy said roundly that if he found any trace of poison he would report it, even at the risk of his life. They were led by the Commissioners to the room on the second floor where the corpse was laid out. Much has been made of a sentence at the beginning of their report—'We found on a bed the dead body of a child who appeared to us to be about ten years old, whom the Commissioners told us was the son of the late Louis Capet.' It is pointed out that the doctors took care not to say that the body was that of Louis-Charles in their report. But the title of their report says, 'The body of the son of the late Louis Capet.' Apart from that, it was not the duty of the doctors to identify the body. They did, however, ask Gomin, Lasne, Damont and Gourlet, all of whom were in the room where the autopsy took



place, whether the child was the Dauphin, whom they had been appointed to guard. All four gave the same answer, Damont adding that he had seen him at the Tuileries. When the operation, in which Pelletan took the principal part, had begun, a Commissioner, Darlot, arrived to relieve Damont, but was told that the latter was to remain with him on duty, on account of the importance of the occasion. Darlot knew nothing of the death of Louis-Charles until informed of it at the Temple. He too identified the dead child from his memory of him before the imprisonment.

The detailed report of the autopsy, signed by the four doctors, attributes the death of Louis-Charles to a scrofulous disease from which he must have suffered for some time. A careful reading of it shows that the boy died of what we to-day call intestinal tuberculosis.

During the operation Pelletan profited by a moment when he thought he was not being observed to steal the dead child's heart. Dumangin saw him place it in a piece of linen, so that he could carry it away with him. He took it to his house, and put it in a crystal vase filled with spirit. The vase he placed at the back of the top shelf of his library. When the heart had become dried and hard he put it among a number of anatomical curiosities, so that it should not be conspicuous. One day he showed it to his secretary, who stole it a few days later. But when the secretary died, his widow restored it to Pelletan, and it was returned to the jar. In 1817 Dumangin and Pelletan exchanged angry letters, and their quarrel came to the ears of a gentleman whom Louis XVIII had deputed

to find those still alive who had played any part in the tragedy of the Temple. Hue also heard of the quarrel, and Louis XVIII expressed his intention of transferring the heart to Saint-Denis with fitting ceremonial, but enemies of the doctor started a rumour that the relic which he possessed was not genuine, and Louis XVIII took no more interest in the affair. When Pelletan died his son inherited the heart, and treasured it until his death in 1879, when it passed to a friend, an architect named Deschamps. From him it passed to Edouard Dumont, the family of the Comte de Chambord having refused it. I do not know where it is to-day.

At eleven o'clock on the evening of this same day, June 9, arrived two delegates of the Committee of General Security, Bergoing and Kervélégan. After having visited the room where the boy was laid out they examined the Temple Register and the various documents, to see that all was in order. And only when they had satisfied themselves that the Government could not afterwards be reproached with any irregularity did they decide that the moment had come to break the news to the staff and garrison of the Temple. They said that too much importance must not be attached to the death of the boy, who would be buried without ceremonial. Damont then pointed out that, in view of the shock of surprise which the announcement would cause, and the queer rumours that were going round, the soldiers on guard were not likely to allow the bier to leave the precincts until they had opened it and satisfied themselves that it contained the body of the Dauphin. So the officers and



non-commissioned officers of the detachment of the National Guard on duty were summoned to the room and shown the body. Each was asked if he recognised the Dauphin, and most of them replied in the affirmative. A report of the death was then drawn up by Darlot, signed by the officers and by four Civil Commissioners, and copied into the Register. Lenotre asks how these men could have recognised in semi-darkness a shaven head, a skull which had been sawn or a face covered by a sheet, crowding round the bed by the light of a lantern or a candle. Beauchesne and Chantelauze certainly made the event more plausible by placing it, wrongly, before the autopsy. It occurred after the autopsy, but there is no reason why there should not have been twenty lanterns or candles, nor why a skilled surgeon should have disfigured the face to any great extent. Lenotre adds that it is hardly likely that the sheet was raised. On the contrary, it is beyond the bounds of possibility that it was not raised. You do not gather a body of men to identify the features of a corpse, and then leave the face covered. Again, he says that there were those in the Temple who could have identified the dead child before the autopsy. Some of them had already done so. But, in any case, it was not his sister or Tison or Gourlet or Caron or Baron or Meunier who were likely to insist on opening the bier at the gates. It was the soldiers.

At midday on June 10 a certain Guérin arrived to relieve Damont, and since by this time the news of the death was causing not only consternation but ugly rumours, Guérin was asked by Gomin and Lasne if he had ever seen the Dauphin, and if he would be able to recognise him. In

the account which he wrote of his period of duty he says that Gomin and Lasne seemed to be taking immense pains to put a stop to the rumours—some were saying that the Dauphin had been rescued long ago, and was alive and well, others that he had been poisoned. Guérin told them that he had seen Louis-Charles at the Tuileries four years ago, and said that if the operation had not disfigured him too much he was confident that he would be able to identify him. He was taken to the room, and, in his own words, ‘The face was uncovered, and I recognised him.’

A message was sent to the Committee to demand an order for burial, and at four-thirty came the decree. The son of Louis Capet was to be buried in the customary place for such burials and with the customary formalities. The guardians were to be assisted by two Civil Commissioners of the Temple Section, and there were to be the usual witnesses. The decree was passed on to the Section, and Voisin, the Overseer of funerals, procured from the attendant at the cemetery of Saint-Marguérite a coffin of white wood. At seven o'clock the two special Commissioners, Arnault and Goddet, inspected the body, and the police officer who had accompanied them, Robin, agreed to the suggestion of the still panic-stricken Lasne and Gomin, that yet more witnesses should be summoned. As on the day before, the officers on duty were brought up to the room, and those who had seen the Dauphin before and now recognised him, added their signatures to the formal declaration of decease. Dusser then inspected the body, which was lying on a wooden bed without a mattress, and while he made out his report

Lasne, seeing that the body was about to be placed in the coffin, brought a sheet to serve for a shroud. The coffin was then carried down the winding stone stairs and placed at their foot, still open. For Voisin feared that Mme. Royale might hear the sound of the nails being driven in. Dusser had given word for the funeral procession to start, when a police officer reported that a large crowd had already gathered at the main gate of the Temple. The order was countermanded, and there was a consultation, at the end of which a message was sent to the Section, bidding the authorities send at once two detachments of from twenty to twenty-five men, some to accompany the procession, but at a distance, to avoid all suggestion of a military display or of undue honour paid to the dead, and some to bar the entrances to streets in the neighbourhood. For it appears that nobody had thought it possible that, even from the lowest motive of curiosity, the people of the district would assemble in any numbers to see the procession go by. The detachments arrived and took up their stations, and once more Dusser gave his order. Voisin had by now nailed up the coffin, and at some time between eight and eight-thirty, under the clear sky of a warm summer evening, Louis-Charles left his prison. At the last moment one of the Commissioners, either fearing a demonstration on the part of the crowd, or in order to show his republicanism, said that the procession should leave the Temple by the door of the stables, and not by the main gate. He was overruled by Dusser.

Four men carried the coffin on a stretcher. Before it went, at the slow march, a patrol commanded by a sergeant. Behind came Lasne, Gomin, Arnault and

Goddet, followed by officers of the National Guard on duty that day and the Civil Commissioners. Dusser brought up the rear with another patrol, commanded by a corporal. The route which the procession followed can be traced upon the map to-day, for most of the streets bear the names which they bore at that time. They went by the rue de Bretagne, across the rue de Turenne and the Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire, along the rue St. Sébastien, and turned down the Boulevard Voltaire to the rue Popincourt, and its continuations the rue Basfroi and the rue St. Bernard—a distance of a little under three kilometres. In the rue St. Bernard was the entrance to the old cemetery of Ste. Marguérite. There was no demonstration of any kind in the streets as the body went by, and there were few people at the entrance to the cemetery. Bureau the porter says that the coffin was taken first into the church, but since there was not from beginning to end anything religious in this burial, and since darkness was coming on, it is more probable that the coffin was carried without delay into the walled enclosure where was the dilapidated house of the gravedigger Valentin, and the burial plot. In the middle of this plot was the common grave for the poor, a long trench which was added to as occasion required. Here, in the thickening dusk, without ritual, without a prayer for his soul, they buried Louis-Charles, and the gravedigger's wife came out of her house and stood among the group that watched. By ten o'clock, when darkness had fallen, and earth covered the cheap coffin, the burial certificate was written out and signed and witnessed. Dusser stationed a sentry by the side of the grave and

another at the gate of the cemetery, and the soldiers and Commissioners went away into the night.

But even as, during his lifetime, he had been the centre of perpetual controversy, with mystery gathering about him as his end approached, so after his death, while the pretenders were making his sufferings the plot of their pitiful comedies, a debate arose as to the exact spot in which he had been buried. For while some said he had been buried in the common grave, others, such as Voisin, spoke of a special grave. Lasne told Beauchesne it was a special grave. The burial certificate merely referred to 'a' grave. To have placed the body in a specially prepared grave would have been out of keeping with the whole spirit of the ceremony, and contrary to the purpose of the authorities. But when the question became more hotly discussed after the Restoration, it was remembered that there had been one man, now dead, who could have told them for certain where the Dauphin had been buried—Valentin, the grave-digger. So they sought out his widow, who had been an eye-witness, and she told this remarkable story. Early in the morning of the day after the burial she was hanging out her linen to dry. Her husband, who was working at the common grave, beckoned her over to him, and began to prod his spade into the earth in which the coffin had been placed. She took no notice, and he said, 'You're not very inquisitive for a woman. Don't you even want to know what has become of the coffin?' To which she replied that politics (*sic*) were none of her affair, and she wouldn't have left her clothes-line if she had known that this was all he had to

say. Valentin then called her a fool, and she went back to her work. He stood leaning on his spade, apparently lost in thought. Some days later he brought up the subject again, and told her that he had removed the coffin on the night of the burial, and had placed it in a grave under the outside wall of the church, on the left of the door. She was not interested enough to go and look at the place. Valentin can have made no mistake, for he had marked the coffin with chalk. Furthermore the widow said that, although she had not been interested in the proceedings, there was a friend of her husband's called Ducoufflet, a beadle, who could help. And this Ducoufflet said that in 1802 Valentin and he were talking together in the cemetery, and that Valentin took him to the wall of the church, removed a large stone on which a rough cross had been cut, and said to him, 'You see this place? One day there'll be a monument here, for beneath lies the coffin of the Dauphin.'

In January 1816, on a motion of Chateaubriand, it was decreed that a monument should be erected in memory of Louis XVI, Louis XVII, Marie-Antoinette and Mme. Elizabeth. With this purpose in view Louis XVIII ordered the immediate completion of the Madeleine, from the cemetery of which incomplete church, a year before, the remains of the King and Queen had been transferred to Saint-Denis. At the same time the King, probably with considerable reluctance, ordered Decazes, the Minister of the Interior, to organise a search for the remains of Louis-Charles. For in spite of the keeping of the anniversary of his death, with full religious ceremonial, all over France, no official action had yet

been taken. Survivors were interviewed, and Decazes, having weighed the evidence, came to the conclusion that the story told by the widow Valentin was true. Arrangements were made to follow the directions which Valentin had given to his wife and to the beadle. When the day arrived the curé of Sainte-Marguérite, Father Dubois, and his assistant clergy held themselves ready for the arrival of the police, when the work was to begin. But the police did not come. Instead came a message announcing that the search would not take place. Louis XVIII had been persuaded that, since there were so many conflicting rumours, no good could come of opening the question of the Dauphin all over again. And a curious occurrence some days before the search was to begin at Sainte-Marguérite, may well have helped him to make his sudden decision to suspend the work. A gardener called Charpentier, engaged in the Luxembourg Gardens, having heard that there was to be an exhumation, brought to the Prefecture of Police the following story :

On the thirteenth of June, 1795, five days after the Dauphin's death, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, he was summoned before the Committee of his Section, and told to return at ten in the evening, with two assistants, a spade and a pickaxe. He reported to the Committee at ten o'clock with his two assistants and their implements, and at eleven an official took them in a carriage to the end of the rue du Jardin-des-Plantes, without offering a word of explanation. There they all dismounted and walked to the Clamart cemetery, nobody speaking a word. At eleven-thirty they reached the cemetery, and the official told them to walk a few paces from the gate, and then to

dig a grave, three feet broad, six long, and six deep. While they dug, they heard the sound of wheels. They were told to stop working, the gate was opened, and three members of the Committee of the Section got out of a carriage. Helped by the driver, they deposited a coffin on the ground, and Charpentier and his mates were sent outside the gate. When they were told to come back, they noticed that the coffin had been placed in the grave, and was partially covered with earth. They were ordered to complete the work and to stamp the earth down with all their strength. They concluded that the object was to remove all trace of a newly dug grave, and when they had carried out their orders, they were sworn to complete secrecy, and threatened. The assistants were given ten francs each, and Charpentier was promised a reward, which he never claimed, because he heard one of the four members of the Committee say, with a laugh, 'Little Capet will have a long journey to make to rejoin his family.'

Whether Louis XVIII believed this story or not, he was afraid of making himself a laughing-stock, and already it had been suggested that there was no proof that the remains transferred to Saint-Denis were really those of his family. Several criticisms of Charpentier's story have been made, most of them trivial. Chantelauze says roundly that the story is a pack of lies, and I agree with him. Chantelauze also asks whether one of those entrusted with the task of removing all traces of the body, after swearing the workmen to secrecy, would have blurted out the truth which nobody must know. It is, I think, this last picturesque detail



which brands the tale as an invention. But apart from this, the whole thing has an air of fantasy. Perhaps Charpentier was, without his knowledge, the instrument of some obscure political intrigue. Louis XVIII, having ordered a search to be made at Sainte-Marguérite, could hardly order another to be made at Clamart. Those who wanted the whole matter to be closed could now point out that if he paid serious attention to one story, he must pay serious attention to them all. And he himself was only too ready to be rid of the entire problem. So instead of looking for the remains, he decided that there should be sung at Saint-Denis a solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of his nephew's soul. Decorations were put in hand, and all was ready for the Mass, when a countermanding order arrived. The King had been informed by the clergy of Saint-Denis that Requiem Mass could be sung in their church only for royal princes whose bodies lay in the vaults beneath.

In the month of November 1846 the curé of Sainte-Marguérite was the Abbé Haumet, a man who had always been interested in the question of the resting-place of the Dauphin. He had read widely on the subject, and had compared his reading with the persistent tradition of his parish. He believed the story of Valentin, and thought that the remains lay where Valentin said he had placed the body. During this winter of 1846 he found it necessary to erect a hangar in the enclosure of the old cemetery. While the digging was being carried out the workmen found opposite a pillar of the side-door of the church, and not as deep down as is usual, a leaden coffin. It had never occurred to the Abbé that the Dauphin had been

buried in a coffin of lead, and his first instinct was to dig deeper, and fill in the earth over it. But then he remembered the story of Valentin, and he looked at the coffin, which seemed to be too big for a boy of ten. He explained this to himself by saying that doubtless Valentin, who had to do his work quickly, had taken the first coffin to hand. And then the Abbé remembered something else. The doctors who visited the boy in the Temple noted that his legs and arms were unnaturally long, as a result of his illness. So he had the coffin carried to the presbytery, and showed it to Dr. Milcent. He and Dr. Tessier opened the coffin in the presence of the Abbé and one or two other priests, and inside they found an almost perfect skeleton, save for a few small bones or fragments of bone which had been lost owing to the coffin being cracked in one or two places, through age. The first thing that struck them was that the legs and arms were disproportionately long. The body was that of a young child, the limbs those of an older child. But what presently rooted their attention was the skull, still bearing the mark of a surgeon's saw, and with a few strands of auburn hair adhering to it. The examination then began in earnest, and two more doctors, Récamier and Devasse, were called in. There was a discussion, and some were momentarily inclined to say that the limbs and the body belonged to different skeletons. But they recalled the illness of the Dauphin and the consequent abnormal growth of his limbs. When someone remarked that the Dauphin's legs and arms could never have been as long as those of the skeleton, the Abbé Bossuet, who was one of the group, declared that he had been told by Mme. de Tourzel, that even

before Louis-Charles was imprisoned he had very long arms, and that he could sit with crossed legs and touch the ribbons of his shoes without bending forward.

Milcent, after a careful and prolonged examination of the remains, came to the following conclusions: The bones were not those of a very young child. They had certain characteristics which one would expect to find in one who had been of an unsound constitution, either through a tubercular affection or through living in unhygienic conditions. On a thigh bone and a leg bone there was caries or rotting. These marks of what had been tumours, Harmand's description of the long arms and legs, and the report of the autopsy performed by Pelletan led him to realise that either this was the skeleton of Louis-Charles, or they were in the presence of an astounding coincidence. The tuberculous tumours might well account for the disproportion in the various parts of the body. Further, Pelletan, in 1817, had said that one would find the brain-pan in position, since he had put it back after the operation; and the brain-pan was in position. Then there was the fact that the body had been found in the exact spot where Valentin said he had placed it, and where the local tradition said that it would be found if a search were made. To sum up, the only thing that left any doubt in his mind was this question of the leg-bones, which were of a size quite extraordinary in a child of ten. And that doubt began to disappear when he considered the historical evidence, and particularly the relation of Harmand.

All this Milcent embodied in a letter to the Abbé Haumet.

Dr. Récamier also summed up his examination. The

bones, he found, had been in the earth a long time, the skull had been sawn, before burial, above the level of the eye-sockets, and the sutures were very plain, as they would be in youth. The remnants of hair also belonged to a young child. He gave several technical measurements in detail, but said that the skeleton could not be properly reassembled owing to some of the bones being missing, particularly a good deal of the spinal column. As far as he could judge it was the skeleton of a male, and the bones of the legs and arms and the size of the twenty-eight teeth would seem to point to a boy of fifteen or sixteen, or even more. The head and the body, the hair and the cranial bones, on the other hand, were those of a child of about twelve years. The head could not be the head of an adult. The ribs and clavicles were certainly those of a very young child.

Here, then, was still a mystery, and other doctors found it impossible to reconcile the teeth and the bones of the limbs with what otherwise must be the remains of the boy who had died in the Temple. But Provins, as usual, spoils his case by quoting an opinion that would make out the remains to be those of a man of between twenty and thirty ! The only result of the examination was to leave those who believed that the Dauphin had died in the Temple more certain than ever that they had found his remains, and those who believed that he had escaped more certain than ever that the leaden coffin enclosed the skeleton of some unknown person. Forty years later, in 1886, Chantelauze made further enquiries, and received a letter from the Abbé Gaulle, once the curé of Sainte-Marguerite, who had been present in 1846 in the cemetery. He and

the Abbé Bossuet had often talked the whole matter over. The Abbé Gaulle, in his letter, recalled the surprise of all, when the coffin was opened, at the strange disproportion between the legs and arms and the body, and how their first instinct was to abandon the enquiry; but that they then remembered the stories of this odd deformity in the Dauphin, and proceeded with the examination of the bones. The most interesting sentence by far in this letter is the following: 'On the coffin was a crudely carved but unmistakeable fleur-de-lis.'

In the year 1894, the problem still being considered unsolved, searchers came once more, a hundred years after his death, to wrangle over the bones of Louis-Charles. They found the oaken box, inscribed L. XVII, in which the Abbé Haumet had placed the remains after the enquiry of 1846. Celebrated surgeons and physicians of the day pored over the grim relics, now turning brown with age, and tried to read the secret. There was the undeveloped chest, there were the ill-formed ribs, and there was the skull which had been sawn by Pelletan. They also found strands of fair hair. The conclusion of doctors Backer and Bilhaut was that the skull was that of a child, the vertebrae those of an adolescent. Backer declared that the skeleton might be that of a boy of fifteen. Certainly the age could not be less than fourteen.

For my part I do not doubt the story of Valentin, which has the authority, to-day not sufficiently respected, of tradition. I am convinced that the skeleton found in 1846 was that of Louis-Charles, and I think that the exhumation of 1894 was unnecessary. Common sense would have us leave aside the debate on the measurements

of a tibia or a femur, the fuss about teeth, and the question of the various ages from twelve to thirty which the various doctors deduced from the appearance of the remains. It is more profitable to concentrate the mind upon the skull, which was unanimously declared to be the skull of a child, and still bore the mark of Pelletan's surgical saw, and upon those general physical characteristics which had been noticed during the Dauphin's lifetime, and now reappeared from the grave. None of the doctors finally expressed the opinion that the coffin contained parts of two different skeletons. What they said was that the disproportion between the limbs and the body and head was abnormal enough to be startling—a discovery which Harmand had made in the Temple. But the historians who hold that Louis-Charles escaped, in claiming that it is absurd to believe that a child of ten could have the limbs of a child of fifteen, forget that the argument cuts both ways. It is equally absurd to believe that a child of fifteen would have the head and body of a child of ten. Finally, nobody who has ever seen a case of intestinal tuberculosis would have been any more surprised than were Pelletan and Dumangin at the incipient deformity of Louis-Charles.

## PART II

### THE IMPOSTORS

#### CHAPTER I

HERVAGAULT

THE dramatic or mysterious death of a prominent figure often stirs the public imagination so strongly that a legend of survival grows up. We have seen this in our own time, when there are still to be found people who believe that Kitchener never went down with the *Hampshire* and that the Czar Nicholas II is still alive in Russia. But in the case of the Dauphin Louis-Charles, the belief in his survival not only satisfied an appetite for the picturesque and the romantic, but was made to serve the purposes of every political party in turn. This belief became so widespread in certain circles that some say there were, at one time or another, as many as fifty pretenders. De la Sicotière<sup>1</sup> gives a list of thirty. Dr. Le Conte<sup>2</sup> prints the names of thirty-six. Most of them are of no importance to history. Some were adventurers, some lunatics. But besides these there are the four principal pretenders, Hervagault, Bruneau, Richemont and Naundorff. With them I propose to deal, one by one.

<sup>1</sup> *Revue des Questions Historiques* (July and October 1882). *Les Faux Louis XVII.*

<sup>2</sup> *Louis XVII et les Faux Dauphins* (Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1924).

Jean-Marie Hervagault was the first of the impostors to become famous. He was the illegitimate son of the Duc de Valentinois and a lace-maker of Versailles named Nicole Bigot. Shortly before his birth on September 20, 1781, his mother married a tailor of Saint-Lô, René Hervagault. At the age of fifteen he left home to start on a career of vagabondage and petty crime. From time to time he was arrested and imprisoned, and he gave himself various names, nearly always aristocratic; now he was the son of the Prince of Monaco (which was true), now of the Duc d'Ursel. Whenever he was returned to his father he escaped again, to continue his haphazard existence on the roads. In and out of prison, changing his name whenever he pleased, he occasionally won the confidence of trusting ladies—as of that Mlle. Talon de Lacombe who believed him when he said he was a Montmorency, clothed him, housed him, gave him money, and finally escorted him to his family castle at Dreux—where she found out her mistake, and left him to his own sharp wits. It is obvious that he had an air of distinction and naturally good manners as well as a gift for telling a story. But his adventures hitherto had been but the prelude to the remarkable story that follows.

Wandering, apparently aimlessly, he came to the town of Meaux while the May fair was in progress, and attracted the attention of a kindly hawker named Mme. La Ravine. She noticed his neat clothes, the gift of the trusting Mlle. de Lacombe, his refined face, his blue eyes and fair hair, and invited him to inspect her wares. Alas, said he, he had no money. His wallet and his papers had been stolen in Paris, where he was at school. He would now



have to finish his journey on foot to Damery, where his parents, prosperous farmers, lived. It meant a night in the open. The good woman at once offered him a bed for the night, which he accepted. Next day she lent him four louis, which he promised to repay, and advised him to take the Strasbourg coach as far as Port-à-Binson, which was near his home. He left her, and bought a ticket to Strasbourg, spending the last of his money at Châlons, where he had a meal at the post-house. Continuing his journey he had the coach stopped a little way outside the town, saying that he must dismount for a moment. That was the last the passengers saw of him, for he hid himself behind a hedge until the coach was out of sight, and then set off across country. The only explanation of his strange conduct in advertising that he was going to Damery, booking to Strasbourg (regardless of the expense) and disappearing into the countryside, is that he wanted to cover up his tracks. Having crossed the Marne, he found himself in a hamlet called Mairy, where, once more, he won the pity of a stranger, who offered him the half of a bed occupied by a farm-boy. Whereupon the lad drew himself up and asked who on earth he supposed he was, that he should dare to offer him such an insult. The peasant not unnaturally took the boy for a lunatic, and went off to the magistrate at Cernon to report the occurrence, with the result that Hervagault was arrested and sent to the prison at Châlons. Since he would not answer any of the questions put to him, the magistrate had no other course but to imprison him.

At Châlons he was again questioned, and gave his age as thirteen—the Dauphin, had he been alive, would have

been thirteen, but Hervagault was seventeen. He would say nothing of his birthplace, his parentage, his business or his past life. He would not even disclose his name, until the magistrate grew angry and insisted on knowing it. The reply which he finally extorted was this: 'They are busy enough searching for my name. They'll discover it all too soon!' And there in the prison at Châlons the comedy began. The concierge of the prison, Vallet, lent him a large sum of money, and he proceeded to order from the local tradesmen whatever he desired—perfumes, linen, clothes. He furnished his cell, distributed money right and left, and received from some unknown donor a magnificent service of silver plate, upon which his luxurious meals were served. The prison officials were struck by his bearing, and by his air of having been used to a life of costly comfort. For instance, they had to change the prisoner's sheets every night.

Soon tales of the mysterious prisoner began to be told in the neighbourhood. By firesides at night sentimental women talked of boys of noble blood orphaned by the Revolution, and wondered which of the great names this interesting prisoner bore. Some who had been at the Court of Louis XVI came to the prison to see him, and went away delighted with his gracious manners and his modesty, and deeply moved by his misfortunes. The more he became an object of interest, the easier it was for him to raise money, and the more amusing his life was. Evidently he would have had no difficulty in escaping, and half the big houses in the district would have been proud to open their doors to him. As it was, he was allowed to go out for walks with his visitors, and, as time

went on, the suspicion grew that this was not merely a young nobleman, but a young nobleman of a very great house. The more they saw others fawning on him, the more certain they became of this, and the more they fawned on him themselves. Either the prisoner must have been a very talented actor, or else completely devoid of humour, to have been able to play his part without once being overcome by laughter. This was better than roaming about the countryside !

The police had inserted notices in the newspapers, but so far nobody had answered them, or made any claim to the lad described therein. His name was still unknown. But one day he appears to have decided that it was time for him to end the suspense of his friends. Or perhaps he got caught in an unwary moment, and found himself forced to disclose his identity. Anyhow, out it came. He was Louis-Antoine-Joseph-Frédéric de Longueville, son of the late Marquis de Longueville. His home was at Beuzeville, in the department of Eure. His mother's family was Sainte-Emilie. The secret was out, and those who had from the first detected the heir to a great name were overjoyed. The civic authorities wrote to the Mayor of Beuzeville, as soon as the name of the boy had been passed from lip to lip, but the reply was unsatisfactory. He said that he had never heard of Longueville of Beuzeville, or of Sainte-Emilie; nor had anybody else who was addressed, in other parts of Normandy. For all his self-assurance Hervagault must have passed an uneasy week or two—or perhaps he had been clever enough to foresee what would happen. Far from suspecting that he was a liar, his friends became even more intrigued,

telling themselves that the prisoner no doubt had a sound reason for deceiving them in the matter of his name. And one of them, the divorced wife of a hairdresser, and the woman who had supplied the furniture for his cell, suddenly realised the truth. The strange conjunction of the names Louis and Antoine reminded her of the late King and Queen. Their son, supposing he had escaped from the Temple, as many believed, would now be thirteen years old. But this prisoner was thirteen years old, was used to luxury, and accepted homage as his due. Therefore this was indeed the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, the Dauphin Louis-Charles—King Louis XVII ! So fat, red-headed, middle-aged Mme. Saignes dropped a word here and a hint there, until the whole district knew who was in the local prison, eating off silver plate and spending money like water. And from that moment the cell was transformed into an audience chamber, and Mme. Saignes organised a small court, with as much ceremonial as could be managed in a prison. The courtiers, of course, discovered that they had known the truth from the first, but everybody took care to spare the prisoner's feelings and to respect his reasons for not claiming openly his rights. As for him, he had an easy part to play. It was not he who had said he was the Dauphin. He had merely let them all suppose it. And when some—for instance a M. de Beurnonville, who had been one of his father's bodyguard—knew more about his past than he knew himself, he merely had to assent with dignity. So the days passed happily. Always he had his crowd of adorers about him, and he began to get inside the skin of his rôle. When one or other of them made some hesitat-

ing reference to the terrible days of the Revolution, he was for a moment overcome with emotion. A tactless reference one day to the death of his mother broke down his self-control. He stumbled, sobbing loudly, from the cell. And with strong filial piety he gave alms and asked his devoted followers to pray for his father's soul.

There came, says an anecdote, one day to Châlons a traveller; one who had taken his turn on guard at the Temple, and remembered the Dauphin vividly. Hearing that the boy was now in the prison at Châlons he obtained from the authorities permission to visit him. He found him at billiards, with his courtiers about him. Hervagault, no doubt reading quickly the expression on the traveller's face, or else having been warned of the visit by Vallet, said loudly: 'Here is a gentleman who recognises me, and who will say so, if he has the courage.' To which the traveller replied that he had never set eyes on the boy. 'I saw you in the Temple,' said Hervagault, deeply moved. 'I recognise you. I was playing with my shuttlecock, which had got caught in the rope of the bell, and it was you who released it with your bayonet. Oh, yes! I recognise you perfectly.' Whereat the traveller, bowing low, said: 'Yes. I also recognise you. You are the son of my ill-fated King.'

The prisoner had been at Châlons some eight months, and the story of what was going on in the district had spread in wider and wider circles. The Minister of Police in Paris, Dondeau, began to take the thing seriously, and roused the local authorities. He knew well that something extraordinary must have occurred to make so many people declare such a dangerous belief, and the whole

affair was causing too much interest. Some way must be found of putting an end to it.

In January 1799 a bombshell fell upon the 'Court' at Châlons. It became known that a humble tailor of Saint-Lô, by name Hervagault, had recognised his son from the official descriptions of the prisoner circulated throughout France, and was willing to take back the young rascal, who was always running away from home, and being brought back by the police. He promised henceforth to keep a close watch on him, in order to prevent further escapades. The courtiers were even further humiliated when the prisoner did not, as they hoped he would, deny that he was the tailor's son. Here they had all been bowing and scraping and kissing his hand, showering gifts on him, flattering him, and all the time he had let them make fools of themselves. Then, when the thing had begun to pall, he had calmly acknowledged that he was a tailor's son.

The police took him to Saint-Lô in February, where the tailor identified him, and he was returned to Châlons, to his old prison. But in the meantime the poor courtiers had had time to think things out, and were now even more convinced than before that he was the Dauphin. Vallet, although he had been dismissed from his post, refused to claim a sou of his debt. None of the tradespeople would send in their bills. His friends in the district asked each other why the tailor had taken so long to claim his son, and had then claimed him at the moment required by the Minister of Police. It was said that the father wrote to the son in the tone of an inferior addressing a superior. Where did the lad get his fine manners and his luxurious

habits? It was quite obvious that the poor fellow was afraid to stand up to the authorities, and thus expose himself to more years of barbarous persecution. Evidently Hervagault the tailor had been the man who consented to receive the Dauphin when he escaped from the Temple, and had covered him with his own name. It was their own fault. In their loyalty they had called attention to the unfortunate boy, and had put the authorities on his track. If the sentimental ladies and the romantic gentlemen had believed in him before, they came almost to the point of worshipping him now. And when he was brought back to Châlons, after being identified, to serve a month's imprisonment for his imposture, his faithful followers were satisfied that they had in their midst a royal martyr, but that it was not in his interest for them to proclaim the fact too loudly. His reasons for pretending to be the son of a tailor must, now that they were so clear, be respected. There was a moving scene at the prison gates when his sentence was finished, for the dupes were all there to speed him on his way to Saint-Lô, and to express, as discreetly as possible, their wishes for happier times.

As the reader would expect, whatever his intentions had been when he started on the journey, he never reached Saint-Lô. Probably he never wanted to reach it. At all events he began his swindling all over again. A woman, Marie Bouges, whom he attempted to impose on at Guiberville, denounced him, and at Vire in the Bocage he was this time condemned to two years in prison. Lenotre finds the sentence severe and the apparent lack of interest of his parents surprising. But surely he had done

everything possible to earn such a sentence and to make his parents weary of his endless escapades.

Hervagault must have told himself now that if he was to make anything of his life, the time had come to study his part in earnest. He had made a beginning, and without taking the thing too seriously had, to his surprise, been able to impose on a number of intelligent, educated people, among whom were some who were not strange to the usage of courts. If the conquest of the leisured and well-born could be accomplished with so little effort, what might not be done with a documented life-story and an appeal to the masses. The chief difficulty was, of course, his ignorance, save for a few details he had picked up, of the life of Louis-Charles. This ignorance he banished in the prison of Vire, for there came to his hand that extraordinary book which was to be the guide-book and bible of all the pretenders--Regnault-Warin's '*Le Cimetière de la Madeleine*.' He had two years, from August 1799, to spend in prison—and this time it was prison, and not a royal apartment—and he must have rubbed his hands with glee as he read Regnault-Warin's romance. For the story of his early life he had to depend on what he could remember; on the news which had come to his home, on tales told by his mother. But here in this book he was to read the account of his escape—an escape which may well have taxed his ingenuity up to now. Here it all was. His sick-nurse—(the Dauphin was never allowed a sick-nurse)—was in the conspiracy. The boy was smuggled out in a linen-basket, and a drugged substitute brought in in a wooden horse by two royalist agents of Charette. He was taken to Fontenay, Charette's



headquarters, and crowned in the church there. And so on. Regnault-Warin gave no date for this dramatic rescue, but when Hervagault repeats his own version of the story to Beauchamp, it is at the end of May 1795 that the sick-nurse reveals his approaching good fortune.

While the tailor's son in his prison at Vire learnt his part, he was not forgotten by the people of Châlons. The ridiculous Mme. Saignes kept up a correspondence with him, and forwarded to him any money or presents which were from time to time collected for the royal prisoner. And it says a great deal for her heart, but little for her head, that when the day of his release arrived and he walked out of the prison, she was there to welcome him and to conduct him to Châlons. To outwit the police it was decided that they should arrive after dark, and that he should pass as Hervagault, the son of the tailor. He was lodged temporarily in the house of Mme. Saignes, and there the nonsense began all over again—curtsies, low bows, deferential tones, devoted speeches. But this time Hervagault had even more self-assurance, for he knew a good deal more about himself. They had jumped to the conclusion that he was the Dauphin, without much encouragement from him, and he was now going to make the best of a good idea. One of his courtiers, M. Jacobé de Rambécourt, possessed, at Vitry, a mansion which was judged not unworthy of the royal exile. Thither he condescended to go, still making use of the name of the humble tailor, as a protection against further molestation.

And now came on the midsummer of the whole affair. Rambécourt and his wife let themselves go, and the respect formerly shown to the youngster was as nothing compared

with his daily life at Vitry, and at the houses which he visited in the neighbourhood. He was allowed to want for nothing, and his following increased, so that the banquets to which he went were crowded with excited royalists—a circumstance which, in the eyes of the police, justified renewed action against the tiresome adventurer. Batellier, who had been a member of the Convention and had voted for the King's death, was watching affairs in Vitry, and preparing to make a report to Fouché in Paris.

On the Vigil of the Feast of St. Louis, August 24, Mme. Jacobé de Pringy gave a banquet at her house in the old Versailles manner, following, during the evening, as much as possible of the prescribed ceremonial; for Hervagault had become a stickler for etiquette. All the believers were present at the banquet, delirious with pride and joy. One of them told a story which he had heard in Rome. It was said that the Dauphin had gone there after his escape from the Temple, and that Pope Pius VI, in order that there might be no question of his identity in the future, and that all might know that he was indeed Louis-Charles, summoned twenty Cardinals, and in their presence placed a certain distinguishing mark upon the right leg of the royal exile; a strange story repeated by most of the pretenders, since Hervagault was to set them an example which they had to follow. With a condescension that delighted the assembly, the tailor's son drew down his stocking, and exposed to the view of all an imprint of the shield and lilies of France. But there was to be a still greater treat for the initiated, as they named themselves. At a reception at the house of a notary of the town some of the guests asked their host whether it might not be

possible to induce the Dauphin to relate the story of his escape from the Temple, and his subsequent adventures. Hervagault, well prepared, deigned to accede to the request of his subjects. And he gave them of his best. He told them of his nurse, and of how de Frotté (the Felzac of Regnault-Warin's novel) carried him away in a basket, having paid the tailor Hervagault 200,000 francs in worthless assignats to substitute his son for him. He related his wanderings from the camp of Charette at Fontenay to England, where he dined with Artois, who tried to poison him. The King of England then entertained him and advised him strongly to go and be crowned in Rome, by Pope Pius VI. The benevolent King even offered him a ship, a trustworthy servant and a letter to the Pope. The Pope was pleased to see him, summoned a Consistory, crowned him King of France, and imprinted the shield and lilies on his leg, by means of a red-hot iron. Returning by way of Portugal this boy of eleven fell in love with the Queen's sister Bénédictine, a widow. But there was no time to arrange the marriage, since France awaited him. But there was just time, before he left, for the Queen to see to his recognition by nine foreign ambassadors, who undertook that their masters would organise a League in his support. But once back in France the *coup d'état* of Fructidor sent him wandering the countryside. The rest they knew. . . . All this, delivered with dignity, and with interludes for a little rhetoric, as befitted so rich an Odyssey, bemused still further the devoted courtiers. To us who read it, it seems impossible that grown men and women can have listened with grave respect to such a farrago of lies. They not only listened.

They believed it all, and were now ready to lay down their lives for their young master. He himself must have been very sure of their gullibility to strain it to such an extent.

We must not think of Mme. Saignes as typical of those who surrounded him. They were not all good-hearted provincial shopkeepers. There were soldiers, landowners, cultured women of the world among them. There was the renegade bishop of Viviers, one of the four bishops who took the oath to the Civil Constitution. He had seen the Dauphin at Versailles. When he heard the rumour that the boy was at Châlons, he came to the town, recognised him at once, and from that day watched over him, restraining the ardour of the royalists who would have had him claim his rights. Nothing would persuade this ex-bishop that Hervagault was not the Dauphin.

The news of what was going on in Vitry brought more and more people to the town, to catch a glimpse of the youth whom everybody said was Louis-Charles. Mme. Royale had heard the tales, and dismissed them as fantasy. But Batellier, who was on the spot, saw to what proportions the thing was growing, and by September 16 he had his warrant of arrest from Fouché. On the evening of that day all the notable families of Vitry were gathered at the house of M. Jacquier-Lemoine for a banquet in honour of the Dauphin. Hardly had the meal commenced when there entered with scant ceremony Police Commissioner Drouart, with his assistant Bonjour and a detachment of police. The least disturbed of all there was Hervagault, though he saw at a glance what this incursion meant. The officers of the law were forced to

wait while the swindler calmly gave his orders. He bade M. de Rambécourt fetch his coat from his bedroom. His host was sent to pack up a few articles of clothing. An abbé was commanded to find his spectacles and bring them to him. To Aduet the notary he graciously extended his hand for the customary kiss. Finally, when the police had seen the most distinguished citizens of their town behaving in this inexplicable fashion, the warrant was served, and Hervagault consented to accompany those who had arrested him to the prison. But in this crazy chronicle surprise follows surprise. Behind him, through streets crowded with those who had assembled to see what was happening, came the flower of Vitry's citizenry, dressed for a banquet, the light from the torches flashing on the jewels at wrist and throat. And presently, with a thrusting and shouting, there passed the cooks and valets and waiters of M. Jacquier-Lemoine and his friends, bearing silver plate, flagons, flowers, tables, chairs, candles in heavy sconces and dishes of food supported on warming apparatus. The royalists were not giving in as easily as all that, and the interrupted banquet was to continue in the prison; especially as Mme. Saignes, M. de Rambécourt and M. Jacquier-Lemoine had been arrested for complicity.

Justice moved slowly. The farce of the imprisonment at Châlons was repeated, with the courtiers coming and going as they pleased, and the etiquette of Versailles maintained. There were costly meals, magnificently served, and Hervagault had a secretary to deal with his correspondence—he was cunning enough never to sign his name. When he went to Mass a servant carried his

cushion and missal for him, and stood behind him in the church. At the end of December two gentlemen imprisoned with Hervagault were released, and were able to bring more partisans to the prison. Batellier went on doggedly with his enquiry, though there were some who wanted to settle the business by locking up the whole crowd in a madhouse. Batellier thought there was more in it than madness, and at last, in the middle of February, the pretender was condemned to four years' imprisonment. Foolish Mme. Saignes was acquitted. But after two appeals had been heard at Rheims, the sentence of Hervagault was confirmed, and Mme. Saignes was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of five hundred francs, for complicity in the swindle. She broke down, but Hervagault himself was perfectly calm, with a touch of swagger. His counsel had pleaded that there was no law to prevent people observing any etiquette they chose in the presence of a tailor's son. If ladies and gentlemen wanted to bow and curtsy to a tailor's son, there was nothing to stop them. They knew all about him and his parentage, but they had determined to treat him with honour and deference. Was there a crime in this? There is no doubt that, but for instructions from Fouché, Hervagault would have won his appeal and Mme. Saignes balked the Government's attempt to reverse the finding of the tribunal at Vitry. For the people of Rheims resented the verdict, and got up a collection for Hervagault. He had become an even more romantic figure by reason of a rumour that the ex-bishop of Viviers, Charles Lafond de Savines, his Grand Almoner, had found a bride for him, an illegitimate daughter of Louis XV and Mlle. de

Nesle, named Mlle. du Luc. But it was too late. The tide of the pretender's fortune had now turned, at the moment when he was at the summit of his popularity and success, and he just missed marrying the granddaughter of a King. The indefatigable attempts of his Grand Almoner to rescue him after his imprisonment at Rheims on April 3 kept Fouché interested in him, and Beauchamp, Hervagault's chronicler, says that at this time it was decided to make a political use of the prisoner. Fouché is supposed to have advised Bonaparte to recognise him as the Dauphin Louis-Charles, and then to force him to renounce the throne. Bonaparte rejected the idea. Since Beauchamp was a member of the Committee of General Security there may be some truth in this fantastic story.

From Rheims, Hervagault was moved, in September 1802, to the notorious Parisian prison of Bicêtre. Here he remained for three years and five months, enduring some small part of the sufferings of the boy he had claimed to be. According to his biographer, after conquering the violent despair which at first nearly robbed him of his senses, he settled down to improve his education, and taught himself to read Horace and Tacitus. He may have thought himself forgotten, but such was not the case. The faith of his old friends was unshaken, and while Europe was being remade and while Napoleon was becoming its master, they worked in their own way, fussing, issuing manifestoes, and never ceasing their efforts to win new supporters, or losing hope of one day seating their hero on the throne of France. Jacquier-Lemoine and his wife were the centre of a nest of conspirators at Nancy.

But as the years passed Hervagault was losing his old self-confidence, and his health was being undermined. It is said also that he contracted the depraved habits of the prison.

When he was released, in rags, in the month of February 1806, he possessed nothing but an order to return without delay to Saint-Lô. He wandered about, seeking a lodging for the night in the house of some family of the old nobility, but at every door he was refused admittance. Towards dusk he went to the lodging of the wife of one of his companions in the prison, but she was out. So he hung about in the street, until his miserable appearance attracted the attention of the wife of a pastry-cook named Boizart. This good woman came out of her shop, and asked him what ailed him. He told her that he was waiting for somebody, and as he looked exhausted, she led him into the back room of the shop, and bade him sit down, while she attended to her business.

It seems to have been Hervagault's fate to meet, at critical moments of his extraordinary career, simple people with hearts of gold. This luck of his was always his undoing, and now once more the genuineness of his welcome must have tempted him to try another throw with his destiny. He had no fine clothes to rely on now, and no courtiers, but he had that air which he had once been able to assume at will, and though he was ill, exhausted, and down-at-heel he immediately started his old tricks. When Mme. Boizart came into the back room after a short absence in the shop, she found her guest with his head in his hands, and crying piteously. One hand clutched a little portrait of Louis XVI on silk. The



scene was set. Not unnaturally surprised at this display of emotion, the woman questioned him. Perhaps his parents had served the King. Perhaps he himself had known him. Still shaken with sobs, he admitted that he had indeed known the King. But the entry of the husband Boizart threatened to end the comedy. Less trusting than his wife, and not at all pleased to find a ragged tramp by his fireside, he demanded the young man's papers. The word Bicêtre did not improve matters. Hervagault, however, said that his parents were dead, and that his imprisonment had been the sequel of terrible misfortunes. It must have been the good acting that softened Boizart. He decided to shelter him for the night. Next day Hervagault, seeing that their curiosity was aroused, asked them to put him on his road, since he was a poor wretch about whom nobody ought to bother. Boizart and his wife bought him clothes and looked after him, their conviction growing that his parents had been of the nobility. And finally their curiosity was rewarded. He told them that he was the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, but implored them to keep his secret, in order that he might not be again arrested and thrown into prison. When they reassured him, he told them all the old stories, larding his talk richly with names they would know, and others which they could verify at their leisure. The family, royalist in sympathy, listened in awe to the young man, and Mme. Boizart was so excited by what she had heard that she ran off to a parish priest, and blurted out the good news. He, of course, told her not to be a foolish woman. The Dauphin was known to be dead. However, he added, it will be well to make certain. And

he told her to return in a day or two, after he had made enquiries. When she returned the priest told her to get rid of the impostor at once. This she did, first supplying him with money for his journey. And so, in early March 1806, we find the adventurer, now twenty-five years of age, in the stage-coach bound for his Norman birthplace once more.

When he reported to the authorities they advised him to settle down and try to make an honest living as a tailor. At any rate, he must forget all the nonsense which he had talked. And one of them noted, in a letter to Fouché, that though he promised to mend his ways, he did it with an air of one who makes mental reservations. He remained at home for a while, but either he had news from Vitry, or else he determined to try to pick up the threads of his old life where he had dropped them more than four years ago. He failed, and once more came back to Saint-Lô. But by now his father had had enough of him and his ways, and a complaint made to the authorities resulted in Hervagault being drafted to a colonial battalion stationed in Brittany. He escaped from the police-escort on the way and took to the open country, turning up at the house of a M. Quérouent in Vannes, and announcing himself as the son of the Duc de Degmon-Pignatelli. At Auray, where he was indiscreet enough, for once in his life, to use his own name, he was recaptured, and arrived under escort at Belle-Isle-en-Mer, the headquarters of his battalion, on the last day of November 1806. Perhaps the reader thinks that this fantastic story is now finished, with the hero caught, and brought under military discipline. Far from it.

How did he take to the life of the army? As a duck takes to water. The officers of his battalion were convinced that this was no common soldier. They believed everything he let them believe about him, with the result that he was not asked to demean himself by fulfilling his military duties. Instead of living in barracks, he had a house and a servant, and a horse whenever he wished to go for a ride. He was not even expected to wear a uniform. And, incredible though it may seem, this went on for two years. Lenotre quotes a description of him at this time, in which it is said that he took everything as his due, accepting services with disdain, and even with contempt. At any rate, once more he imposed upon men of the world, and made an agreeable life for himself in new surroundings. He generally had plenty of money, and when he had not, could always get credit, for the shopkeepers knew what was said of him. He ran up debts, took the high hand when anybody questioned him, and became a kind of legend in the neighbourhood.

But this pleasant life came to an end when the battalion embarked on the *Cybele* at Lorient on November 8, 1808. Apparently the officer commanding the battalion had the hardihood to suggest that this eccentric soldier under his command should embark like any ordinary man of the battalion. When the *Cybele* put to sea she was attacked by an English ship, and among those who fought with courage and distinction was Hervagault. The damaged *Cybele* put in at Sables d'Olonne, where Hervagault deserted, after being placed on the sick list.

Henceforward, until his final imprisonment, it is impossible to trace his wanderings in any detail. He must

have borrowed money as he went along, and probably found many people ready to believe his story and give him food and lodging. He came to Paris, and from there set out for Vienna, with Heaven knows what fresh hopes in his mind. But he got no further than the Rhine. He stayed at Versailles with a noblewoman, and he tried to reach England. At Rouen, on June 17, 1809, he was arrested and searched. He had no money, but they found a rosary, a religious medal, a religious book and a gold watch. They were in time to prevent him swallowing a piece of paper on which was written a scurrilous quatrain about the Emperor. He was imprisoned in Rouen, but at the end of July was removed to the Bicêtre in Paris, as a State prisoner. Here he remained for nearly three years, passing from degradation to degradation, perverted, attacked finally by a horrible disease. An appeal for a pardon at the beginning of 1810, under a general amnesty for deserters, was refused, and in black despair he grew more and more depraved. On May 6, 1812, the parish priest of Arcueil, the Abbé Langolin, who was the prison chaplain, exhorted the dying Hervagault to make a good confession and to repent of the sins of his life—among others his prolonged and stubborn imposture. But he repeated that he was the Dauphin, possibly because he had come to believe it himself. Two days later he died, and his body was buried on May 9 in the common ditch reserved for the mortal remains of the destitute.

It will be obvious to anybody who has read this story that there is no evidence worth a sou that the tailor's son was in reality the Dauphin, saved from the Temple. But

what is documented fact is that a large number of people, not all of them simpletons, accepted him as the Dauphin, and not only accepted him, but persisted in their belief even against reason, and when enough had happened to discredit him twenty times over. Their credulity, an attested historical fact, proves what men and women can make themselves believe if they are given the chance. They may have ended, dupes themselves, in duping the unfortunate Hervagault. They are, at any rate, as much to blame as he. Here was an unstable, lazy and exceedingly attractive boy, with a taste for adventure in his blood. He knew, from his mother, that there was a mystery about his birth, and as he grew to boyhood he must have drawn a contrast between his appearance and that of his comrades, and been conscious of the difference between his present life in the humble home of the tailor and his mother's tales of Versailles, with perhaps a hint, as he became older, of his parentage, and with great names mentioned that remained in his memory. As soon as he had left home this boy must have remarked the effect of his charm, and of a certain air of lineage, upon all whom he met. He probably began to boast a little, and discovered that people were ready to believe his boasting. Whether he thought out his great stroke himself, preparing the campaign as he walked the roads or skulked in the country prisons, we do not know. Perhaps he would have contented himself with the name of some great nobleman, as he so often did, until the end of his life. Or perhaps early successes fed his ambition, and put into his head the most daring idea of all. But there came a moment when he was ready to play his great game. He had grown accus-

tomed to hinting that he was acquainted with the Court, that his parents had been at Versailles, at the palace. It may have been Mme. Saignes or one of her friends who first mentioned that he had a look of the poor Dauphin. It may have been her readiness to listen to him that prompted him to come out into the open. At all events, in the prison of Vire, where they called him M. Louis, he saw what there was to be got out of the rôle, and began to do some reading, and a little tattooing. On his release, he considered himself amply justified, by the enthusiasm of his followers, in leading them as far as they would go.

Evidently not the credulousness of his followers, by itself, could have kept the thing up so long. The principal agent was his charm of manner, which he knew how to season with just that dash of disdain, of aloofness, which is expected in royalty. He knew how to extract money and clothes and food by wringing people's hearts, but when these things were once forthcoming he knew how to accept them as his due, *de haut en bas*. Given charm, dignity and impudence, he had not a very difficult part to play. He was the first of the pretenders in the field, and, unlike those who came after him, he had not the fear that a predecessor might have told a different story. There was no reason for his followers to doubt what he told them at M. Lemoine's dinner-party. If any of them had happened to read the romance of Regnault-Warin, they would have regarded it, as other contemporary royalists seem to have done, as an authentic account of what happened, subject to correction, of course, by the Dauphin himself.

Much has been made of the difference in age between

Hervagault and the Dauphin—a difference of four years. But the point is trivial. A police report of the period of his arrival at Châlons mentions that he has the appearance of being thirteen. More interesting is the fact that one of the Commissioners at the Temple who signed the death certificate of the Dauphin was named Bigot. Did not this suggest that Nicole Bigot had asked a relative to be near her son, after he had been substituted for the Dauphin? The interest fades when we discover that the Bigot in the Temple was not related to Hervagault's mother. He was of a Parisian family, she from Franche-Comté. The real test would have been to ask a survivor to get from him an account of his days in the Temple. Hervagault, in his rodomontade, though very wary about details, made several blunders, and suppressed entirely the period from January to July 1794—though that was the one period about which he might have lied with considerable freedom, and moreover was the period that would have left the deepest imprint upon him.

There is a last strange echo of the story of Hervagault. The Duchess of Angoulême, sister of the dead Dauphin, had Nicole Bigot presented to her at Cherbourg in 1827, and gave her some jewelry.

## CHAPTER II

### BRUNEAU

THREE months after the battle of Waterloo, in September 1815, there disembarked at Saint-Malo an ill-dressed man of unprepossessing appearance. He was about thirty years of age, spoke like an illiterate, and indistinctly, owing to the loss of several teeth, and bore numerous scars. He had no baggage, but the American Consul at Saint-Servan gave him a passport, and he wandered about barefooted in the autumn weather. He fell in with a widow named Phélippeaux, who housed him and fed him and bought him clothes, as soon as he had convinced her that he was the son she had last heard of in the Spanish Campaign of 1808. He was able to play this part, as he had met the young man in America, after his escape at the time of the Capitulation of Baylen. He returned to Saint-Malo, and since he had no passport—according to his own story, he had burnt it—he was arrested. At his examination, he said that he was a native of New Orleans, by trade a baker, and that his name was Charles de Navarre. Then, thinking better of it, he announced to the startled magistrate that he was the Dauphin, the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, but that he had no intention of asserting his claim to the throne so long as his uncle, Louis XVIII, lived and reigned. When they



appeared to doubt him, he became angry, demanding to be taken to his uncle in Paris, that his statement might be verified.

News of this scene travelled quickly through the town and across the countryside. The effect was instantaneous. All the old memories awoke, and the old stories were remembered. On the simple assumption that no man would make such a claim unless it were true, the Bretons thronged the streets of Saint-Malo and clamoured outside the prison. The knowledge that such a fairy-tale had come true so soon after the restoration of the Monarchy drove them into a delirium of joy, and the Prefect of the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine became annoyed and anxious. The prisoner, for his part, was dictating a letter, which fortunately survives, to a companion. It was sent to Louis XVIII, and informed him that his nephew was in prison at Saint-Malo, and had written him fourteen letters since his return from the La Plata River. He admitted that he had passed himself off under the assumed name of Charles de Navarre. And with a caution equal to that of Hervagault—or to his inability to write—he omitted to sign the letter. Another letter, begging the Governor of Guernsey to bring his imprisonment to the notice of the King of England, was signed by his secretary and gaol-companion ‘Daufin-Bourbon.’ In January, while the excitement was still growing and spreading, he was transferred to Rennes, and from Rennes to Rouen. During his fifteen months in the prison which had once housed Hervagault, at Rouen, his fame grew and far surpassed that of his predecessor. As everything had been in Hervagault’s favour—his good looks, his charm, his air

of nobility, the dignity of his bearing—so everything was against this coarse drunkard, who could not even counterfeit the speech of a gentleman or the glance of one who had once known Versailles. His success is inexplicable, but it cannot be denied.

At first, for all his royal blood, Charles led the life of a common prisoner, with no special privileges, and, in fact, with a special proviso that he was not to be allowed to speak to anybody or hold communication of any kind with anybody, without the written authority of the Mayor of Rouen. This did not prevent him from informing his companions of his identity, with the result that the excitement which had seized Brittany now infected Normandy. One would have thought that the comedy of Hervagault was still too recent to be repeated, with variations. But Libois, the concierge, who also kept the prison tavern, soon found that there was money to be made by satisfying the curiosity of those who had heard a strange tale of a prisoner who claimed to be the Dauphin. To curiosity succeeded credulity, and that mystic devotion to which the adventures of Hervagault have accustomed us. The ragged prisoner soon began to appear in clean linen and good clothes, and with plenty of money in his pockets. His dirty straw gave place to a bed. The prison rules were ignored, and the other prisoners found every reason to believe that their late comrade in misery was really the Dauphin. Otherwise, how could he have such influential friends, and such a contempt for the prison regulations? For people were soon coming from all over France, at first well-to-do shopkeepers, a local abbé, several small landowners, and then great ladies and noblemen from Paris, and even some who were taken to be

envoys from the throne itself. As time went on, Charles evidently became practised in his part, for more than one visitor detected the blood of Louis XVI in him when he spoke with sudden anger or directed a glance full of majesty towards some erring courtier. It was the old story of Hervagault over again, with this difference: that the new Dauphin's court was a far less aristocratic one. It was a roystering, democratic court, to which everybody was welcome, provided only that vast quantities of wine were paid for. The hero was frequently drunk, but that did not prevent his visitors from kissing his hand before they left, or the more emotional, many of them drunk themselves, from kneeling before him. The tavern of Libois did a roaring trade, and here Charles would sit, laughing with his followers, and telling them the old story of his rescue in the basket of dirty linen, and his journey to Charette. For he had primed himself patiently with Regnault-Warin (he read with extreme difficulty), or else had come across someone who knew Hervagault's tale.

If among his dupes there were any who found his manners oddly plebeian and his habits surprisingly gross, they probably reminded themselves piously that this was the work which Simon had accomplished, and that many years spent among tramps and cut-throats in America and other parts of the world could not fail to coarsen even a King's son. But when every allowance is made for the explanations they gave themselves, it remains astounding that such a farce could be played a second time in a prison, and that the devoted followers cherished their illusion in the face of difficulties that seem now to have been insurmountable.

There was, of course, business to be attended to, and

when the Dauphin was not giving audiences or entertaining his friends in the tavern, he was dictating letters to the unfrocked monk Larcher, his secretary and fellow-prisoner, or his Memoirs (without apologies to Regnault-Warin) to one of three other secretaries. Larcher's speciality was bombastic proclamations. But there were other matters, for groups of royalists were being formed, and there began to be talk of dethroning the usurper Louis XVIII. The King may have feared that the Dauphin was still living. But it is more likely he feared that too many people might come to believe it. His police, under Decazes, tried to keep the whole affair quiet by drawing as little attention as possible to it, but it got beyond them. There were rumours that the Duchess of Angoulême was inclined to believe in the story of her brother's survival. On the death of the crude and vulgar Larcher, a new secretary had been appointed, a swindler named Branzon whose literary gifts attracted a more sceptical type to the prison. More than one such visitor was sufficiently deceived to take a serious view of the whole affair, and the news that the prisoner was not the ordinary impostor they had expected spread to more and more people. For it appears that Charles had learned to develop a second personality—an impressive and dignified one—which could impose on educated men of the world. That is the only explanation for the language used by the lawyer Poirel about him.<sup>1</sup> Clearly he had never seen him in the tavern with his humbler followers.

<sup>1</sup> Poirel described his favourable impressions in a letter to the Marquis de Messy, reproduced in Mme. de Saint-Léger's *Était-ce Louis XVII évadé du Temple ?* (Perrin, 1911).

A list of questions compiled by Turgy, probably at the request of the Duchess of Angoulême, was sent to the prison, but a police spy, acting under orders from Decazes, intercepted the letter. Turgy, who had followed his mistress in all her wanderings, and was now an official of her household, knew, if anybody did, the questions to ask, and the replies would have been interesting. But apparently the authorities were not ready to risk anything. The questionnaire opened with the famous ‘What happened on January 21 when we heard the sound of the cannon? What did your aunt say, and what unusual thing occurred in connexion with you?’ Another of the questions, ‘What did you do with soapy water?’ should not have proved very difficult. But ‘Where were the Droits de l’Homme, and in what room?’ was an excellent question. There were seven in all. Since they never arrived, the Duchess tried other methods. Two noblemen, Montmaur and Margerit, were sent to Rouen, and were conducted by Libois, according to his own story, into the presence of his royal master. What followed, according to Libois, is, likely enough, a mixture of lies and truth. It is probably true that the envoys asked for a certain word, arranged between the Dauphin and his sister in the Temple, which Charles had said would convince her; and true also that Charles refused to utter the word save to his sister. He gave them his Memoirs, but wisely refused to allow the manuscript to be shown to his sister. Lenotre sees in these envoys police agents sent to trap the prisoner, or perhaps royalist followers, trying to increase the pretender’s prestige—both ingenious theories, for the truth of which there is no evidence. The visit of the two noble-

men caused a considerable stir, and never had the credit of the prisoner stood so high. Mme. de Tourzel is said to have been among the callers, and a Colonel, de Foulques, who swore fidelity in such a touching manner that he was at once taken into the prisoner's service, and despatched with a letter to the Duchess of Angoulême in Paris. Groups of royalists were now meeting all over France, and the wildest plans were being made to rescue him, and to bring him in triumph to Paris. He put on the uniform of a cavalry officer, and summoned an artist to paint him. He began to appoint ministers, and to talk openly of his approaching triumphal progress into his capital, and he issued a historical memoir containing certain facts which he thought his future subjects should know.

This document mentioned that the marks of his identity included the scar of the rabbit-bite on his left cheek,<sup>1</sup> and of course the emblem with which he had been branded by Pope Pius VI at the Vatican—an 'ineffaceable mark representing the Holy Ghost,' and not the shield and lilies of Hervagault. He then mentioned two facts in connexion with the period of August 10 and the attack on the Tuileries, which nobody but Louis XVI and the Dauphin could know. There were two hiding-places in the Tuileries which the King 'after that terrible scene' had shown him, where certain papers had been deposited; he could easily find them again. There followed a number of quite unimportant anecdotes about his early life, and a truly remarkable account of his coronation in the Temple after his father's death. He was awakened about midnight by his mother, and taken into a room where his sister, his aunt and a priest awaited him. By the door, 'to guard

<sup>1</sup> The Dauphin's scar was on the left base of the jaw.

against any surprise,' was a gentleman named Michoni (evidently Michonis). The priest read out certain prayers, and then 'placed the diadem on my head.' The details of the introduction of this ornament into the Temple would have been interesting. Having been crowned, the Dauphin, according to this document, was smuggled out of the prison by de Frotté and another man. There followed an account of his travels, for which he drew partly on Hervagault and partly on his disordered imagination. One of his most amusing slips was a reference to his dog Fidèle. The Dauphin had a dog named Castor. Fidèle was the name by which Mme. Elizabeth and the Queen referred to Toulain in their secret correspondence.

By this time the partisans of Charles were ready to strike their blow, and the inhabitants of Rouen could read the prisoner's proclamation on the walls of their town. But at the end of April 1817 Decazes acted. He had done his best not to draw attention to the affair, having left the pretender at peace in his prison, and having closed his eyes to the absurd game which was being played in Rouen. But the limit had been reached. He knew from the reports of his spies and from officials of the Department that the thing had really become serious, owing to the number of people who, with no love for Louis XVIII, were ready to believe in the adventurer. He therefore determined to put an end to the foolery, and the prisoner was taken from his prison by night, under a strong escort of police, and transferred to the prison of the Palais de Justice, where, after a long and thorough enquiry, he was to stand his trial. But the first difficulty was to establish his identity, and since he had claimed, nearly two years

ago, to be the son of the widow Phélippeaux, it was decided to proceed against him under the name of Charles Mathurin Phélippeaux, of Varennes-sous-Monsoreau, in the Department of Maine-et-Loire. His supposed mother, the widow at whose inn he had stayed while wandering about Brittany in 1815, was summoned, and testified that he was the man whom she had recognised as her son, the conscript who had disappeared in Spain; but that, on second thoughts, she was not so certain. His nose was not like her son's nose. And so on. However, in spite of her refusal to admit that it was her son, for the sake of convenience Charles de Navarre became Charles Mathurin Phélippeaux, and the preliminaries of the trial went on.

But in the summer an odd thing happened. There came to Rouen the wife of an *émigré* who had belonged to the bodyguard of Monsieur, brother of Louis XVI. Her name was the Vicomtesse de Turpin de Crissé, an intelligent and highly respected lady, who lived at the Castle of Angrie, where, in the old days when the west was in arms against the Republic, royalist officers and exiles had been made welcome. At her hotel in Rouen she heard from a friend what was on everybody's lips—the story of Phélippeaux. And it reminded her of something that had taken place a long time ago.

It was in 1795, twenty-two years ago, in the autumn. Royalist officers in the district had asked her to accommodate the little son of a nobleman, the Baron de Vesins, who had been brought to them by an Angevin farmer. She had received the boy, clothed him, mothered him, and even tried to give him lessons, in spite of his aversion to discipline. As for playing games, he said that since his



mother's death he had no heart for them. In spite of being self-willed and given to passionate outbursts, the boy was attractive. He had an aquiline nose, fair hair, blue eyes and a refined face of considerable beauty. The charitable noblewoman enjoyed his society. When the Chevalier de Vesins, on his return from exile in England, proceeded to the headquarters of the Royalist troops in Anjou, and denied that any relative of his was left in France, the boy's hostess took no notice. It was only when the castle was endangered by the Republican advance that she sent the boy to Vesins, in charge of one of her men. On arriving at Vesins they stopped at the local hostelry, where the child was immediately recognised as the son of the village cobbler Bruneau, who had died some years since. The mother was also dead, and a sister who lived nearby was too poor to keep the orphan. Mathurin Bruneau returned with the servant to Angrie, and was once more welcomed by the charitable lady, but this time as a penniless orphan and an impostor. When the castle was once more in danger, the boy fled with various children of the dependents.

This story aroused the interest of Mme. de Turpin's friend and he told it to the Prefect; he, for the last two months, had been making enquiries about a man called Bruneau, who had been recognised during his vagabondage in 1815 by several people who had known him as a boy. The result was that Mme. de Turpin was interviewed by the magistrate, and that Phélippeaux was sent for. She recognised him as Mathurin Bruneau, but he pretended not to recognise her—at first. He then proceeded to put her through a detailed cross-questioning, as

though it were he who had been summoned to detect her in an imposture; asking her the names of her children and other family details and assenting to each answer, as though to say, with one eye on the magistrate, 'Ah, yes, I perceive that she is telling the truth.' Why the magistrate permitted such a scene is a mystery.

The prisoner was now Mathurin Bruneau. Two sisters were summoned, and they identified him. A woman named Cailleau said he was certainly not Bruneau, whose ears she had pierced when he was a baby, and this man's ears were not pierced. Mme. Jacquier-Lemoine recognised him as Hervagault, and therefore the Dauphin—for there was a rumour that Hervagault had escaped, and that an imbecile had taken his place and died in the Parisian prison. Robert, who had been in the *Cybele* with Hervagault, also recognised his old comrade. But in face of this gala of conflicting evidence the authorities decided that Bruneau was to be the name. So Bruneau it was. For the last four months of 1817 the more active of his courtiers were being questioned, and the case was being prepared. On January 27, 1818, he was summoned to appear, two weeks later, before the correctional tribunal of Rouen. His behaviour was astonishing. He cursed and swore like a trooper, and threatened the judges. Of all that had been anticipated, this was the most unexpected. He said that his name was Charles, Duc de Provence, referred to his sister as Victoire, and spoke with the utmost frankness of the private affairs of Marie-Antoinette. His partisans said that the report of the trial was faked; some have said that he was drunk; others that he was drugged; yet others that an imbecile had taken his place. Le Conte

has pointed out that for more than three months he had been undergoing a treatment for some kind of mental derangement, and the simplest explanation of his conduct would seem to be a gradual breakdown of his mind under the strain of drink and of the unnatural excitement in which he had lived for so long.

A week later, on February 19, the Court found him guilty of assuming the name of Phélippeaux, and swindling the widow whose son he had pretended to be; of posing as the Dauphin, and, in that quality, committing further acts of swindling; also of vagabondage. His sentence was five years' imprisonment, a fine of three thousand francs, and three-quarters of the expenses of the case; two years' imprisonment, not to run concurrently, for contempt of court. There was no appeal. He was left in Rouen until May 30, transferred to Gaillon, and removed from there, in May 1821, to Mont-Saint-Michel, where he died, on April 26, 1822, a madman. His followers continued to believe in him, and there was the usual rumour that he had been deported to Guiana. Perhaps we have not heard the last of him, for Mme. Jeanne de Saint-Léger wrote two books about him (published in 1911 and 1916 in Paris). Her thesis is that Louis XVII, Charles de Navarre and Mme. de Turpin's guest were one and the same person, while Bruneau was Hervagault. Richemont, to whom we shall come presently, did better. He was Hervagault, Bruneau and Louis XVII. I see little reason why Charles de Navarre should have been any of the others, and least reason of all why anybody should have mistaken him for the Dauphin.

If it is difficult to understand the success of Hervagault,

it is more difficult to understand that of the second pretender—let us call him Bruneau—unless we realise that the poor fellow was ‘used.’ Many simple country gentlemen, many sentimental shopkeepers, many impressionable peasants were always ready to believe a rumour that the Dauphin was not dead, but had been restored to them in the most romantic fashion. But behind these were the more sophisticated, who never lost sight of the political possibilities connected with such an occurrence. There were those who had an interest in pretending to think that this gross boor was the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, just as there were others who were afraid that it might be true. The first would do everything possible to keep the simple believers in a state of excitement, and to stir up controversy all over France; the second would try to suppress the rumours, to localise the affair, lest too much attention should be called to it. The police department had its own troubles. By swift and vigorous action it would seem to show that it feared the revelation of a truth which could not be denied. By ignoring what was going on it would seem to confess that it knew the claim to be true, and was afraid to proceed against the claimant. Actually, the police took the less wise course, with the result that the rascally lawyer, Bourbon-Leblanc, caused a tremendous sensation by drawing attention to the fact that Bruneau had been in prison for many months, and that the authorities dared not bring him up for trial, and by saying frankly in a book that it seemed as though the Government were trying to prevent the prisoner from appearing before his family and being recognised.

The Government had also to deal with those who were only too willing to vouch for the stories that were going round. While Bruneau was in prison at Rouen there was an old woman living in Paris who had evidently read her Regnault-Warin—or perhaps merely believed the pretender's own account of his escape. She was spreading the news that it was she who waited in a street near the Temple in June 1795, at the request of a Royalist—evidently de Frotté—and she who took the Dauphin in a carriage to Charette at Fontenay. The police interviewed her, and kept a watch on her. It is not difficult to imagine what reasons anyone would have for making such claims under the Restoration.

There was a more interesting character—an old woman who had been living at the Hospital for Incurables in the rue de Sèvres for the last twenty years. The widow Simon. She never tired of telling the story of how she and her husband took the Dauphin away in a basket of dirty linen, and how another boy was brought in a paste-board horse and substituted for him. The patients and the nurses—Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul—were all of them familiar with her account of the affair. Dr. Rémusat was told it in 1811. The Duchess of Angoulême visited the hospital in 1814, when it had become a popular resort for royalists who liked to hear the story, and to dream that it might, perhaps, be true. She was accompanied by two noblemen, but Mother Simon was locked in a room while the visit lasted, and did not meet her. 'I had a secret to tell her,' she said afterwards. There is a story that the Duchess returned on another day, in disguise, accompanied by Montmaur, and talked with

Mme. Simon, who told her that the Dauphin had been to the hospital to see her. However that may be, it was decided, in November 1816, to interrogate the old woman, and for this purpose she was taken to the Ministry of Police. They seem to have terrified the poor old creature, for she did not tell the story with her customary verve. Unless the account of the interview is faked, she was less definite than usual in her statements concerning the rescue, though she insisted that the Dauphin did not die in the Temple. She alluded to a linen-basket into which it would have been possible to put a child, and when they asked her to be more precise, she became flustered. Perhaps she had the wit to realise when it was too late that Louis XVIII would not be overjoyed to find that he was a usurper, and that his police might have their own way of suppressing an unpleasant truth. For evidently she believed what she said. The testimony of the nuns who nursed her was that she was of a charming disposition, sane and sober in her habits. And on her death-bed, according to a granddaughter of Pauline de Tourzel, who had it from certain of the nuns, she persisted in her story while the chaplain waited to administer the Last Sacraments.

When they had finished their examination the police dismissed her, and she was taken back to the hospital, with instructions to stop talking about the matter.

In August 1817, while Bruneau was still in his prison at Rouen, Mother Simon, now over seventy years of age, was again examined by three of Bruneau's partisans, who did not know that they were being used by the secret police. The report which Decazes received from the spy who had the affair in hand, summarised what she had said

to her three visitors. She said that the Dauphin was in good health when she ceased to look after him, five or six months before the news of his death. (Perhaps her memory was at fault in this, for she ceased to look after him eighteen months before the news of his death.) She was certain that he had been rescued, because the prison cook told her so. She herself had seen a little boy, rachitic and deformed, carried out of the School of Medicine in a basket. This basket had been placed on a cart containing soiled linen. She was convinced that the Dauphin was alive at this moment, because she had frequent news of him and because he had been to see her twelve years ago, and she had recognised him at the first glance, not only by his features, but by certain brisk gestures he made, to convey to her that she should not give him away. They were gestures she remembered from the old days in the Temple. She then reminded her questioners that she had said all this before at the Tuileries, in the presence of two men, one of whom, from her description, was possibly, they thought, Talleyrand. She had also said it all to the Duchess of Angoulême and the Duchess of Berry, two ambassadors, two distinguished Englishmen, and to a large number of other people who had spoken to her of the matter. She guaranteed to identify the prisoner at Rouen if he was really Louis XVII, and had many other important things to reveal—but would only reveal them in a court of law. For some time past she had not been out into Paris, since she expected every day a summons to proceed to Rouen to see the prisoner. The report then mentioned some details of the captivity which she had given, but which had not been

included in Bruneau's story. There was the dog Castor (misnamed by Bruneau). There was the occasion when she struck the Dauphin. There was a little dovecote she had rigged up for him. And there was the occasion when, while exercising him, she thought one of the guards was about to shoot either him or her, and so brought the boy in quickly.

On receiving this report, Decazes thought it would be best to have the old woman certified as a lunatic. But the difficulties of doing this were put before him—notably the testimony of the nuns, who said that year after year Mme. Simon had told the same story over and over again, without varying it. But the story she told the nuns was that it was she herself who, on the evening of January 19, 1794, had put the basket containing the Dauphin on to a cart loaded with her belongings and her husband's. She died on June 10, 1819, while Bruneau was in the prison at Gaillon. Had she been allowed to confront him there is little doubt that a combination of his acting and her credulity would have made things very unpleasant for the Government. The recognition of the Dauphin by Simon's widow would have been a trump-card in the hands of the '*initiés*,' as they called themselves. Perhaps that is why she was never brought to Rouen, and why Turg'y's questions were intercepted and why no other survivor—not Gomin nor Lasne, not Thierry nor Dumangin—was brought to Rouen to see Charles de Navarre, alias Charles Mathurin Phélippeaux, alias Mathurin Bruneau, alias Louis-Charles, Duke of Normandy.

It is a long way from Hervagault and Bruneau to



Richemont. The earlier pretenders had a kind of gay insouciance about them, and their stories are good adventure stories. But with Richemont something heavy and middle-aged takes hold of the legend, and we are conscious of a strong undercurrent of politics. Hervagault and Bruneau wandered along the roads of France lying and drinking, and playing tricks on simple people like some vagabond in a mediaeval tale. Richemont, on the other hand, is too much indoors, and there are too many proclamations and petitions. There is a feeling that the intellectuals have got hold of the story and ruined it. And so Richemont appealed to a different type from that upon which his predecessors worked. Hervagault and Bruneau could have led a mob against the Government. Richemont was better at manifestoes. He was a cleverer liar than either of them, but his lies were not so attractive to ordinary men and women. And so he only made a stir in his lifetime. Writers went on examining his claim, and one or two continued to believe in him, but there was no general cult after his death. I find difficulty in realising that anybody could have taken him at his word for long.

## CHAPTER III

### RICHEMONT

‘ . . . As Prince and Head of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon, I protest against the election of Louis-Philippe.’

THUS ended a manifesto prepared in the apartment of the Baron de Richemont in the rue de Fleurus, on the occasion of the July Revolution, and the accession of Louis-Philippe in August 1830. It cannot have been altogether unexpected. For more than two years a man who claimed to be the Dauphin Louis-Charles had been issuing petitions, proclamations, open letters and appeals, of which no official notice had been taken. This man, who called himself the Baron de Richemont, was probably Henri Hébert, born in 1788, a Parisian adventurer of unknown parentage; and possibly ten or twelve other people. He was certainly not Louis-Charles, the Dauphin. In the first month of 1826, at the age of thirty-eight, he left Geneva, where he had apparently passed under such names as Prince Gustave and Baron Pictet. Richemont was one of the names of the Pictet family. He passed through Lyons and came to rest in Rouen, where he took an unimportant post at the prefecture of police, and no doubt employed his leisure in studying the dossiers of Hervagault and Bruneau. Here also he managed a glassworks, and became involved in

numerous intrigues and at least one swindle. He left Rouen hurriedly, was sentenced in his absence to three months' imprisonment, and turned up in Paris at the end of 1827, where he rented an apartment in the name of Baron de Richemont, and within a short time there was another pretender on the war-path.

We are dealing here, I repeat, with a type very different from Hervagault and Bruneau; a man who, like Hervagault, could pass as a gentleman of culture, but one who had a far better brain. An accomplished liar, of infinite resource—though, having his predecessors to study, he was not under the same necessity as they were of inventing scenes. The part had been written, the blunders had been made. Hervagault had played his rôle before an uncritical audience. But Richemont determined that, as he had greater difficulties to surmount, he would do the thing thoroughly. It is possible that he was the young man whom Mme. Simon recognised at the Hospital for Incurables, and to whom she told her story. Such an interview would have given him a useful foundation to work on. Later, he saw no reason why he should not round off the thing by being both Hervagault and Bruneau. Several people recognised him as Hervagault, notably Boizart the pastrycook and his wife. Robert of the *Cybele* recognised him as Hervagault and also as Bruneau.

From 1828 onwards, when he began his work in earnest, he had a technique of his own for winning followers. He had, either in his memory or on paper, a large number of anecdotes in connexion with the Dauphin's life, both at Versailles and in the Temple. The collection of such anecdotes was not difficult, since by now there was a good

deal of literature on the subject. From this stock he would choose the least known and, according to his company, would repeat now one and now another. The natural reaction of a sentimental royalist, perhaps one who had been in close touch with the royal family, would obviously be violent; especially if some treasured but not widely known tale were dropped casually and with consummate art. Another and more simple trick which made converts was to produce copies of letters which he had written to important or celebrated people, and sometimes even the replies. To those who were not convinced by the anecdotes, nor by the letters, he would point to the fact that all who had formerly shown the slightest interest in him or his fortunes had been persecuted by the Government of the day. The old story of the sudden and mysterious death of the Empress Joséphine was used to illustrate his thesis, and the death of Caron, the kitchen-boy in the Temple, in 1820, was of course attributable to his having been kindly disposed to the prisoner and a witness of his escape. Naundorff seized on this with avidity. Caron, still living while Richemont was playing the Dauphin in Paris, could have spoilt that story.

Among those to whom he gave audience in the rue de Fleurus was a gentleman who had been the Duc de Bourbon's secretary, and was destined to act as secretary to Richemont, and to take down from his lips the first of the accounts of his life which were published in France. The temptation to write other accounts, from fuller knowledge of the subject, led to the contradictions which helped to show him up. Labréli de Fontaine's enthusiasm was responsible for the appearance of a story of the escape

from the Temple which shows a certain clumsiness. The account, according to Fontaine, was given to him by Richemont himself. One of them forgot to omit, or change, the name Cyprien, a character in Regnault-Warin's romance. Otherwise it is more or less Mme. Simon's account of the affair. The Dauphin is taken out in a basket, and an orphan, introduced in a wooden horse, is substituted for him. This appeared in 1831. In the same year another account of the Dauphin's life appeared, rather more detailed. In 1843 appeared the most detailed of all. Here we are told that a sham doctor called Ojardias, through the influence of Frotté, gained admission to the Temple and recommended that exercise upon a wooden horse might be beneficial for the sick child. Mme. Simon was bought, and Simon, against his will, joined the conspiracy. On January 19, 1794, Ojardias arrived with the horse, which contained a consumptive, imbecile child. This child was placed in the Dauphin's bed, while the Dauphin was wrapped up in dirty linen and pitched into the cart which was removing the belongings of Simon and his wife. The cart went to a house near the Temple, where de Frotté, Joséphine de Beauharnais and another lady were waiting. The Dauphin was then taken to Charette.

It is to be remarked that Mme. Simon had said that the child was not ill when she left the Temple, that in her examination by the police in 1816 she said that the rescue and the substitution took place at the time of the announcement of the Dauphin's death (June 1795), that de Frotté was in England on January 19, 1794, that Barras visited the Dauphin in the Temple on July 28, 1794, that

Harmand, Mathieu and Reverchon visited him there on December 19, 1794.

Fontaine made considerable use of his master's argument that those who interested themselves in his claim came to an untimely end, and after Fontaine, the advocates of the theory of an escape made this one of their most telling points. Thus old Mother Simon was said to have been poisoned because of indiscretions committed during the trial of Bruneau at Rouen. The priest who buried the Dauphin, knowing that it was not the Dauphin, was also claimed as a victim of poisoning—again without the least tittle of evidence. The unexpected death of Joséphine, on the day after she was supposed to have revealed the secret of the Dauphin's existence to the Emperor Alexander, in May 1814, was attributed by Fontaine to a poisoned bouquet sent by the Comte de Provence, and not to the feverish cold which she neglected. Hoche, again, died by poison, for refusing to help Barras to put Louis XVII on the throne, and not from asthmatic complications.

A frequent visitor to the rue de Fleurus was the Vicomte d'Orcet, and one day in 1833 he brought with him a lady who was destined to be the most intimate and loyal friend of the pretender. Twenty years later he died under her roof. But during those twenty years her loyalty was subjected to the severest tests. When he confessed his lies to her, and substituted more up-to-date lies, based on wider reading, and no doubt on details learnt from old royalists who were duped by him, she went on believing in him instead of kicking him out of her house. This lady was Mme. d'Apchier, widow of the Comte d'Apchier

who had served Louis XVI as a page, and herself, in early youth, was attached to the household of Mme. Royale. This lady, then, as Mlle. Corteille de Vaux-Renard, had not only lived at the Court of Versailles, but had known the Dauphin. She was now to renew the acquaintance of more than forty years ago; and after that first visit she believed she had been presented to Louis-Charles, the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Henceforth she was a frequent visitor, and became a member of the little Court which assembled in the rue de Fleurus. Here he would call up, for the benefit of his followers, the most striking of his memories, and would exhibit, as proof beyond question of his identity, certain scars on wrist and knee, explaining that they were the marks of the tumours he had contracted during his captivity in the Temple. They may have been self-inflicted wounds, or they may have been relics of days in a prison other than the Temple. At all events his fame grew, and the number of his followers increased. He issued from his secret printing-press petitions which he signed with the name of the Duke of Normandy, and when the activities of the police became too dangerous, he would disappear, drawing on his large stock of impressive names for a likely one, and apparently often passing as one of two brothers Perrin, now as Claude, now as Jean. But so completely did he succeed in creating a mystery that, with the destruction of the Richemont dossier in 1871, it is now impossible to be sure whether we are dealing with him or with one of his associates. It has even been maintained that he was the two brothers Perrin, and had three apartments in Paris, one for Claude, one for Jean, and one where the two could meet. According

to this theory, Richemont was merely the name of a composite character, and did not exist as an individual. To give weight to this theory Le Conte draws attention to the two portraits of Richemont in uniform in de Bonnefou's *Souvenirs de la Comtesse d'Apchier*. At this period of his greatest success, even if Richemont was not the Perrin brothers, he was Hébert, M. Louis, Henri de Trastamare, Colonel Gustave, Colonel Legros, Colonel Lemaitre, Bénard, Baron Pictet, the Comte de St. Julien, and anyone else he could think of at need. Throughout these years, 1828-1833, he went on petitioning and proclaiming. He not only addressed his own countrymen in general, but also the Duchess of Angoulême, Choiseul, the Chamber of Peers, and even the foreign powers. Finally, he became such a pest to the authorities, and found so many people ready to believe in him, that he was arrested on a charge of conspiracy, with certain of his associates, and a thorough enquiry was made into the machinations of the past few years.

It was at the end of August 1833 that he was arrested and taken to the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, where he was registered under the name of Ethelbert Louis Hector Alfred, Baron de Richemont. He was later identified with Henri Hébert, and certain papers discovered on his person at the time of his arrest formed the basis of the case against him. But so tangled was the whole affair, and so cleverly did Richemont employ tactics now of silence, now of bluff or trickery, that the law moved very slowly, and it was not until the end of October 1834 that the case came up for hearing at the Court of Assize, in an atmosphere of considerable excitement. Everybody



was anxious to see the mysterious adventurer whom many still believed to be the legitimate King of France, and who was accused of plotting against the life of Louis XVIII and the safety of the State, of owning a secret press, of carrying arms, and so on. At the outset he was recognised as Hébert by people who had known him in Rouen, and almost recognised as a man called Bourlon, arrested in Modena in 1820 for announcing that he was Louis XVII.

The examining magistrate could get no reply out of Richemont when he began to question him, and after a while those present at the hearing began to laugh. Among other things, Richemont was asked if it was true that he had used eight or ten different names. The magistrate reminded him that if he would not speak, there were certain documents which would speak for him, and he read out a passage from one of the proclamations, in which the prisoner claimed to be Louis XVII. On the second day occurred an interruption which caused Richemont to break his silence, and to some purpose. A man in the court cried out that he had something of the utmost importance to communicate. He gave the name of Morel 'de Saint-Didier,' a name which is to be found frequently in that strange circle of Charlotte Atkins, the Irish actress, and those who used, or pretended to use, her money in organising the escape of the Queen, and later of the Dauphin. Morel had for many years steeped himself in the letters and papers of Mrs. Atkins and in the whole mythology of the escape from the Temple, and he now said to the magistrate, 'I bear a letter from the only true Duke of Normandy, now

Louis XVII, but disguised under a name that has never belonged to him: the name of Naundorff. In the letter which I have here the son of Louis XVI protests against the pretensions of the accused.' The letter, which the President read out, was signed 'Charles-Louis.' He then turned to Richemont, and asked, probably as a mere formality, if he had anything to say. Richemont, with a supercilious smile, replied, 'When a man claims a name, he ought at least to know the name he is claiming. Louis XVII's name is Louis-Charles, not Charles-Louis.' This was perfectly true, and it caused a sensation in the crowded court-room. The incident was declared closed by the President, but the expectations of the public had been roused by the dramatic manner in which the prisoner had broken his silence, and Richemont went on to give a short account of his life, a kind of foretaste of what he was to publish in 1843.

According to himself, his romantic escape from the Temple was but the beginning of far more amazing adventures. Condé, who had been responsible for his rescue, sent him to General Kléber, who took him to Egypt as his aide-de-camp. Even in those days of rapid promotion, an aide-de-camp of fourteen was something of a record! He went to Italy with Desaix, his health having broken down in Egypt, and returned to France in 1802, where he had relations with Joséphine, Fouché, and Lucien Bonaparte. During this stay in Paris he visited the widow Simon. He was involved in the royalist conspiracy of Cadoudal, was saved by Joséphine and Fouché, and fled to the United States. In Brazil the Regent recognised him officially as Louis XVII. He returned to Italy, was

arrested, sent from Rome to Paris, and from Paris back to Brazil, whence he led an expedition against Goa. On hearing of the abdication of Napoleon, he hurried back to France to claim his rights, and had, in the park at Versailles, an interview with his 'sister,' which has been described in detail by one of his dupes ('Ah, my sister, my sister!'—'Be gone! You are the cause of all the misfortunes of my family'). After this he went to Austria, and was in prison in a fortress for more than seven years. The rest we know.

The questioning of the witnesses provided a good deal of fun. One of them recognised the prisoner as Hervagault, another as Bruneau, a third, a woman police-spy, upset all calculations by insisting that Richemont was really the Dauphin, and calling him Louis XVII. Morin de Guérevière, after questioning the prisoner about their prison-days in Milan, was satisfied that Richemont was his old friend the Dauphin. But among all these spies and comedians and swindlers there was an old man who turned the alternating bouts of melodrama and farce into something genuinely dramatic. His name was Lasne, and he came to repeat the fact that the Dauphin had died in his arms. But even Lasne did not escape the kind of foolery which all the impostors dragged in their wake, for he was asked to identify another pretender at the back of the court as the child whom he had guarded in the Temple.

When his counsel had finished, Richemont rose to speak in his own defence, and very cleverly he did it. 'You have been told that I cannot be the son of Louis XVI. But have you been told who I am? It was not only the

right but the duty of this court and of all the courts of the kingdom to tell you who I am. Neither time nor means have been lacking. I myself have formally challenged the law, on more than one occasion, to reveal my name. They kept silence. They still keep silence. You, gentlemen, will appreciate the significance of their silence. It is not an effect of malice, but of fear.'

To which the President replied that all this had nothing to do with the jury; that an appeal must be made to the proper authorities—the King's Procurator; that his sister must be involved in it; and that the act of deicide must be declared a forgery. But Richemont's speech was of a kind to sustain the faith of his followers, and even the jury would not find him guilty of conspiring against the King's life. On the other counts he was found guilty, and condemned to twelve years' imprisonment. His accomplices were discharged. As he left the court he was heard to say that he who does not know how to suffer is unworthy of persecution.

He was locked up in the Conciergerie on November 9, 1834, and soon afterwards transferred to Sainte-Pélagie, and he spent his time in writing letters to the Prefect of Police, appealing against the verdict, and repeating his story. His requests were as naive as they could possibly be. Did he really imagine that the authorities would allow him out on parole for twenty-four hours, in order to attend to some extremely important business, or that they would accept his simple word for the state of his heart, which necessitated his removal to a hospital? The prison authorities grew so weary of his ceaseless complaints and demands that arrangements were made for

him to be transferred to Clairvaux. But before the transfer took place he had escaped, on August 19, 1835.

The details of his escape are not known, and his movements after his escape are as mysterious as ever. That there was still an organisation which kept up his claim is evident from the activities of the police, and from the fact that his principal dupes continued to believe in him. Perhaps he lived a great deal in England. According to Mme. d'Apchier he lived with a widow in Paris for some time, travelling about France unmolested. Every year he paid a visit to Vaux-Renard, where his charitable use of the money of his hostess endeared him to the people of the district. At any moment the police could have laid hands on him, and locked him up again, but they appear to have declared that if he were left at large his cause would die out—particularly if a sharp eye were kept on him to prevent any kind of plotting or disturbance of the peace. In spite of this there was more than one short-lived newspaper devoted to the interests of the pretender, and a scheme was prepared by which he was to meet his 'sister.' He had the good sense to refuse. But increasing age did not make him tire of the part he had chosen to play. In 1848 he wrote a solemn open letter to General Cavaignac, in which he recorded his recognition of the Second Republic as the legal government of his country, and, to show his good faith, presented himself as a candidate for election to the Chamber—and was defeated. In 1849 he was received in audience by Pope Pius IX. Some say it was a public audience. Others, including Richemont's own paper, *L'Inflexible*, claimed that it was a private audience, and the reason for this claim became

obvious eight months later, when a leaflet was distributed setting forth that, in the course of the audience, Pope Pius IX had recognised in the elderly gentleman who knelt before him the son of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. But public interest was not what it had been, and it was not thought worth while to proceed against the foolish old rascal.

In the summer of 1853 he went, as was his custom, to Gleizé, to stay with the most devoted of all his dupes in her castle of Vaux-Renard. The old lady had forgiven his lies and his trickery, and nursed him when he fell ill. He died on August 10, 1853, aged 68 (according to the passport which described him as Louis-Charles de France, native of Versailles), and was buried, at Mme. d'Apchier's expense, in the family vault. The death-certificate, signed by the Mayor of Gleizé, the parish priest and a gentleman of Lyons, recorded the death at two o'clock in the morning of August 10, of 'Monsieur Louis-Charles de France, a native of Versailles.' One month later three gentlemen called upon the mayor, and announced that, as friends of the dead man, they wished to draw attention to one or two omissions in the certificate of death. They then declared (and signed their statement) that Louis-Charles habitually carried on his person a birth-certificate, made out at Versailles in the name of Louis-Charles de France; and that, since this certificate had not been found, they wished to make this declaration. For six years the body of Hébert, Richemont, or what-you-will lay beneath a tombstone inscribed with these words: *'Here lies Louis-Charles de France, son of Louis XVI and of Marie-Antoinette. Born at Versailles on March 27, 1785. Died at Gleizé on*

*August 10, 1853.* In 1859 the historian de Beauchesne visited Gleizé and saw the inscription. He at once demanded that the scandal should be ended, and the local authorities received orders to see to the matter. It is said that the certificate was not altered, and has not been altered to this day. As for the tombstone, they turned it over, and on the reverse side they wrote: '1785. *None shall write upon my tomb: Poor Louis, You were indeed to be pitied. Pray to God on his behalf.*'

## CHAPTER IV

### NAUNDORFF

IF the success of Richemont was in his lifetime, that of Naundorff was posthumous. Unlike Richemont he left descendants. But there was another reason. He remained a mystery. His identity was not discovered until 1911. That any of the three pretenders should have found a large number of followers is remarkable, but that Naundorff should have had any success at all is fantastic. He was a man of no culture, who never learned to speak and write French correctly; a heavy Prussian, with the bad manners of a Prussian, and no sense of humour; the second son of a small tradesman of Halle. His name was Karl Benjamin Werg, and he was born on May 3, 1777. He deserted from the army at the age of twenty-two, and subsequently called himself Karl Wilhelm Naundorff. He wandered about Germany, working now at one trade, now at another, and arrived in Berlin in 1810, where he fell under police suspicion. Probably he had stolen money, but he lied his way out of the difficulty, and settled down in the shop of a clockmaker for two years. From Berlin he moved to Spandau, where he married, and went on making clocks. He got into trouble in connexion with the burning down of a theatre, and took to forging money. At his trial he gave three versions, each of them



a mass of lies, of his life-story. Since the police had no difficulty in nailing each lie—although they could not establish his exact identity—the wild idea came to him that he might be an *émigré*, a nobleman returned from ten years in exile, after the assassination of his father; an aide-de-camp of Brunswick. His name? Ludewig Burbong (*sic*). The son of a Burbong (or Bourbon). Asked if he knew French, he said that he had forgotten it. He was sentenced to three years' hard labour for forgery, and for attempting to escape. Part of the sentence was remitted for good conduct, and in 1828, having thought a good deal, he came out of prison.

Clearly he was now qualified to be a full-blown pretender, having served, like his predecessors, a long apprenticeship of chicanery and vagabondage. At the time of his release he was over fifty years of age, and since Richemont had a start of him there was ground to be made up as quickly as possible. So this middle-aged Prussian Lutheran became, on June 24, 1828, a French Catholic named Louis-Charles de Bourbon, Duke of Normandy, born at Versailles on March 27, 1785, and was thus inscribed on the register of the citizens of Crossen, in Brandenburg. Since he was now the legitimate King of France, he realised that it was time to learn French. But there was a more important matter—the history of his past life as Dauphin, and particularly his escape from the Temple. To help him with the story he found a lawyer called Pezold, who may have had instructions from his superiors in the secret police to use Werg as a spÿ, or may simply have wished to make a good thing out of the business. Anyhow, these two put their heads together,

and evolved an account of the escape from the Temple, which is particularly German in its complexity, and further episodes. A dumb child, Tardif, was substituted for the Dauphin in November 1794 by Barras. On June 4, 1795, a scrofulous child, Gonnehaut, takes the place of Tardif, and dies four days later. At one moment, then, there are two substitutes in the prison, and the Dauphin himself, who has been concealed at the top of the Tower. The dead child is buried in the prison garden, and the Dauphin, Werg, is carried out in the coffin. The accomplices of Barras in this crowded affair were those who had died so mysteriously in Richemont's version of the escape. Having been hauled out of his coffin, the Dauphin was hidden in Paris at the house of a royalist lady, and then taken to the Vendée, to Venice, to Rome. Of course he was welcomed by Pope Pius VI, who was always delighted to crown another impostor. From Rome he set out for England, but was captured by a French ship and had his face branded and disfigured by three masked strangers, whose object was to produce an appearance of smallpox. He was then thrown into prison, but, thanks to his old friend Joséphine, the First Consul liberated him in 1800. In 1804 he was fellow-prisoner with the Duc d'Enghien at Ettenheim, and accompanied him to Vincennes. Once more Joséphine intervened, and he went to Germany and served as Brunswick's aide-de-camp. In 1810 he arrived in Berlin, where the police confiscated his papers and gave him the name of Naundorff. And so on. From the moment of his arrival in Berlin he was able to incorporate events that really happened, always representing his misfortunes as the results of a plot against

him, and as time went on the whole story was added to and polished up by Morel, a Prussian, and by Gruau, on both of whom Werg conferred titles.

In the little German town of Crossen the fun began. The book which Pezold and Werg had written was read eagerly, and the first converts were made, and began to pay court to the Sovereign. The appearance in the town of an old officer of Brunswick's, who denied that this Dauphin had ever served with him, made no impression on those who were determined to believe the romantic story. The death of Pezold in 1832 was a blow to the cause, but it gave the Dauphin an opportunity to add another victim of poison to the already long list, and so to continue the valuable thesis of Richemont. For the next year he travelled in Switzerland and Germany, gathering a few followers here and there, but failing to swindle a magistrate out of a thousand francs. In May 1833 he arrived in Paris, where there was evidently some kind of organisation he could count on, for his friends settled the bill at his hotel, and from that moment the affair went better. By a stroke of luck a crazy peasant who was noted for his visions recognised Werg as the Dauphin, and that was enough for many weak-minded people. Some who had followed Richemont now deserted him for his rival, and he felt strong enough to address to Louis-Philippe an offer to withdraw his claim to the throne in return for a pension. And among those who applauded were a gentleman who had been one of Louis XVI's ministers and a lady who had belonged to the Dauphin's household. Bourbon-Leblanc had already swapped Richemont for Werg, and by his side was the Morel whom we have mentioned, the

Prussian who became the pretender's secretary and general chamberlain, and was rewarded with the title of Saint-Didier. Morel was the clever and unscrupulous schemer who composed letters which Werg pretended he had written to members of the royal family—another Riche-mont trick—embellished the legend of the escape, got money out of the dupes, and kept up the campaign. It would be interesting to know if he was consulted when the Dauphin made the foolish blunder of changing his name from Louis-Charles to Charles-Louis, because of a misprint in a book of reference of the year 1787.

The pretender's affairs went well for some time. He chose a mistress, the niece of Mme. de Rambaud, one of his most devoted followers, and sent her to establish his wife and family in Dresden. Pamphlets and petitions were issued in a stream, and he ran a newspaper called *Justice*, until his editor, whom he refused to pay, was thrown into prison for debt, after proceedings which should have been enough to discredit Werg for ever in the eyes of even his warmest supporters. At all events, the success which he had won in a small circle encouraged him to go too far, and when he began to threaten an action against his 'sister,' the Duchess of Angoulême, Louis-Philippe struck, and Werg was arrested, and imprisoned. A search at his house revealed a number of letters from his credulous courtiers, and the police realised that the foolery must be stopped. He appealed repeatedly against his sentence, and his friends used every possible influence to save him, but the Government was now determined. The appeals were dismissed, the prisoner was expelled from France, and forbidden to use the name of Bourbon.

Also, the death certificate of June 10, 1795, was formally declared authentic and legal in every particular.

Once more we have the extraordinary spectacle of a fidelity proof against all changes and chances. For among the curious crowd of swindlers and careerists and mere busybodies, there were some who acted from disinterested motives. Poor old Mme. de Rambaud, for instance, who had known the Dauphin as a child. The moment he had told her a few stories of the past, and had shown her the vaccination marks on his left arm—(had she forgotten that the Dauphin had been vaccinated on both arms?)—she was convinced. Convinced enough to send Morel to Prague to plead the Dauphin's cause with his sister. Convinced enough, when Morel was shown the door, to undertake the journey herself. And loyal enough to remain with him after the Duchess had refused to receive her and the police had requested her to leave the city at once.

Some of his courtiers went with him into exile in London, and it was here that Morel got to work on Pezold's book, and brought it up to date. Here also was published another book on the same subject, in which there is a more detailed account of the escape from the Temple. Since escape seemed impossible, it was decided to spread a rumour that it had taken place, in order to hearten Charette and his men. A child of the age and appearance of Louis-Charles was to be delivered to Charette. But the plan was abandoned in favour of a genuine rescue—which turned out to be two rescues. Both the Dauphin and his substitute were rescued, and the substitute took the name of Louis-Charles, until the real Dauphin's health should be restored. But the rival party, who had rescued

the wrong child, recaptured him, under the impression that he was the Dauphin. They realised their mistake, and knew that the rightful King was alive and free. Apart from all this nonsense, the book gave a remarkable account of the actual rescue. The Dauphin was taken from his room and hidden at the top of the Tower. On the third floor he had to pass his sister's door, but luckily there was nobody on guard. A likely story! But better follows. The Dauphin was dosed with opium, and fell into a coma which just allowed him to see his substitute hidden under the bed in a basket. This substitute was a wax figure. It was put in the Dauphin's bed, and the Dauphin was popped into the basket and carried to the top of the Tower, where he was told to pretend to be dumb. This exchange had taken place at the moment when the guard was being changed, so, of course, nothing was suspected. Meanwhile another child (number three, counting the waxwork) was at liberty, and had taken the name of the Dauphin.

Among those who came to London with the pretender was the man who succeeded Morel as secretary, and was, like Morel, given a title. His name was Gruau, but Werg made him the Comte de la Barre. He at once took a hand in the literary department of the exiled Court. Other subsequent arrivals were Werg's wife and his legitimate children, expelled from Saxony, and Mme. de Générés (his mistress) and his illegitimate children. He had two more children by each of them during his stay in England. There is a story, also of this period, which deserves to be true. They say that Werg met the English claimant, Meves, and convinced him that he, Werg, was the true

Dauphin. He cannot have convinced him, because the two sons of Meves went on with the business when he died in 1860, and continued the claim. During this period of exile the cause did not do too well, largely owing to the appearance in Paris of a book which frankly accused Werg of imposture, written by the father of the editor whom he had swindled so successfully. And though the old devotees remained faithful, there was a falling-off in recruits, so that the exile had to think of other means of meeting the expenses of his two families, now that he was growing old. He had for some years been dabbling in religious matters, and he now turned his attention to the reunion of the Churches, and later founded a religion of his own, an angel having appeared to him. From now on, his mind seems to have been troubled, and he made himself a nuisance to the Vatican. His followers began to desert, and many who had lent him money, pending his ascent to the throne, took legal action. It must have been a bitter day for him when Mme. de Rambaud made the startling discovery that it was Richemont who was really the Dauphin, and changed sides. With her went her money, and Werg sank deeper and deeper into debt. He was in and out of prison; and was turned out of England in 1845. He went to Holland, and sold an invention to the Government—a new type of bomb—and in 1845, on August 10, he died in Delft, at the age of 68. He was buried there in a tomb upon which his family had the following words engraved: ‘*Here lies Louis XVII. Charles Louis, Duke of Normandy, King of France and of Navarre. Born at Versailles on March 27th, 1785. Died at Delft on August 10th, 1845.*’ The last sentence was true.

The qualities which Werg shared with the other pretenders were a tireless capacity for lying, a certain mental instability, a histrionic talent and a gift of imposing on people. Though in the matter of preparing the story of his life he had considerable material to draw upon, and the advantage of the help of men who had studied the entire mythology of the escape, yet he had greater difficulties to contend with than any of them. He was a foreigner, who had to teach himself French, and to overcome the obstacle not only of foreign ways, but of a temperament completely un-French. An instance of the trouble he took is his attempt to evolve a signature which would contain something of the caligraphy of Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and even of the Dauphin. He never created the stir in his lifetime which his predecessors created, and he never can have hoped, being a boor who talked bad French in a German accent, to appeal to the people of the countryside. He had none of the good looks and the airs of Hervagault, none of the common appeal and festive nature of Bruneau, and none of Richemont's culture and easy man-of-the-world manner. Yet he had his following, and after his death, for many years, he made a stir.

When he was dead his body was examined, and the doctors found upon it marks which were popularly supposed to distinguish the Dauphin, and had for that reason appeared on the three other pretenders: the scar of the rabbit-bite, the vaccination mark on the left arm, and the sign of the Holy Ghost made by the Pope. Bruneau's scar was on his cheek. Werg's on his upper lip. The Dauphin's was on the left base of the jaw. With the vaccination mark we have dealt already. The Dauphin



had no sign of the Holy Ghost on his body. A point raised by de Manteyer, to whom we owe the discovery that Naundorff was Werg of Halle, seems to me without importance. He established the fact, from a police document, that Werg's hair was dark brown in 1825. Thirty years can easily change the hair of a child from very fair to dark brown.

The various members of Werg's families kept up the campaign after his death, and in 1857 succeeded in starting proceedings against the Comte de Chambord. But in spite of the brilliant pleading of Jules Favre and the energy and patience of Gruau ('de la Barre') the case was lost. Twenty-three years later the affair was still going on, and Gruau was still writing, and Favre was still ready to plead. In 1877 an appeal was heard, but the Court, after a consideration of the principal points in the pretender's life, pronounced him an impudent adventurer. But not even now were his descendants discouraged, and the two branches of the family went on launching petitions and issuing pamphlets and leaflets. When Gruau died in 1880, they did not pause, and in 1883 his successor, the German Otto Friederichs, took over his work. The turn of the century found them still at it, the two branches quarrelling among themselves. In 1910 there was a petition to the Senate, supported by Foulon de Vaulx (the writer Henri Provins) and Friederichs, to get the claimant Henri Naundorff, who had served in the Dutch army, reinstated as a French citizen. The impudence of this talk of reinstatement—as though the pretender had been a Frenchman—was too much for the Senate, and the family had another disappointment. The War came, and

passed. But even such an event as a European war was not enough to stamp out this lingering absurdity. Henri Naundorff had been refused permission to serve with the French forces, and a generation was growing up to whom his name meant nothing, but he still had followers, and there was talk of a secret dossier at the Quai d'Orsay which contained the proof of the identity of Louis XVII. A search was made, a dossier was found. It revealed the opinion of the Prussian Government on the pretender.

In December 1923 the inhabitants of Paris found on their walls and hoardings a bill signed by 'Prince Louis de Bourbon, true descendant of Louis XVII.' This was Louis Naundorff, a grandson of Werg. The present Pope, Pius XI, gave him an audience and listened courteously to his demand that Louis XVI should be canonised, but found no reason to believe that this half-blind old man was a grandson of Louis XVII.

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